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LIFE AND REIGN

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DOMINIONS OF
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Bible Class Primers.
EDITED BY PROFESSOR SALMOND, D.D., ABERDEEN.

LIFE AND REIGN
OF
SOLOMON

BY THE
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M.A., LL.B., B.Sc.
FRASERBURGH.

Edinburgh:
MACNIVEN & WALLACE
1884.

SCB #16,939

PREFATORY NOTE.

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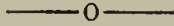
S. D. F. SALMOND.

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LIFE AND REIGN OF SOLOMON.



CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE, BIRTH, AND TRAINING.

1. THE SON OF DAVID. Solomon was the son of David. In more senses than he himself perhaps ever knew, that was his most distinguishing title. He did not make his own fortunes (humanly speaking) as his father had made his. He had not to fight his own battle. Neither the good nor the evil which comes of having to struggle against many difficulties and powerful enemies fell to the lot of Solomon. He was not the son of Jesse, the plain citizen of Bethlehem : he was the son of David, the great hero-king of Israel. And he was by eminence *the* son of David. David, indeed, had many sons. As many as six were born to him by various wives during the years in which he lived (more or less constantly) at Hebron.^a But at that time David was not yet King of Israel. He was indeed far from being the homeless fugitive he had been ; but he was equally far from being the accepted head of God's people, as he afterwards became. Now in the east the law of inheritance was less definite than with us. Absalom, who was born at Hebron, even if he was the eldest surviving son,^b was not certain to succeed to the kingship of Israel. The same was the case with

^a 2 Sam. iii. 2-5 ; 1 Chron. iii. 1-3.

^b Amnon was dead, but nothing is said as to the fate of the second son Chileab, or Daniel. The history is equally silent as to the younger

Adonijah.^a Solomon, on the other hand, was born at Jerusalem. He was born in that new capital, which was the seat and symbol of the new kingdom, the kingdom of God in Israel, the only kingdom which ever really existed by Divine right, because its head was by direct appointment the viceroy of Jehovah, the covenant God.^b Solomon therefore, as the eldest ^c surviving ^d son born to the King of Israel in Jerusalem—born (as we may say) in the purple—and soon showing rare gifts, may have been marked out from the first as the probable heir of all his father's greatness.

2. THE SON OF BATHSHEBA (or Bathshua ^e). It was one of the most grievous faults of those days that rich men, and great men, and especially kings, thought themselves at liberty to take as many wives as they pleased. If the Mosaic law did not absolutely forbid it, it was because God knew the hardness of their hearts,^f and because He was gradually preparing them for a higher moral life; but it was contrary to God's original institution,^g and it was the cause of constant misery and trouble. David's last wife (so far as we know ^h), and certainly the one whom he loved the best, was Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. But David had committed a fearful sin in taking Bathsheba to be his wife, because she was the wife of another, whom he craftily put out of the way in order to get her. David indeed repented very earnestly of his wickedness, but we have no know-

sons born at Hebron, Shephatiah and Ithream. Probably they were taken into the priestly guilds which David established in connection with the new ceremonial set up at Jerusalem (2 Sam. viii. 18).

^a See below, ch. ii. 7. ^b Compare 2 Sam. vii. 11-16, and Psalm ii.

^c Both in 2 Sam. v. 14 and in 1 Chron. iii. 5 he is mentioned last among the four sons of his mother. The history, however, in 2 Sam. xii. leaves no room for doubt that Solomon was the eldest.

^d The first born died (2 Sam. xii. 18).

^e The name is Bathshua in 1 Chron. iii. 5. The same name occurs in Gen. xxxviii. 12; 1 Chron. ii. 3 ("daughter of Shua").

^f St Mark x. 5.

^g Gen. ii. 24; Mark x. 6.

^h David had other sons born at Jerusalem, but we do not know who their mothers were (2 Sam. v. 15, 16; 1 Chron. iii. 6-8).

ledge whether Bathsheba ever repented. We may well fear that she had little real sense of religion, and that she found herself in too false a position for that as the favourite wife of the great king. However, her first child was taken from her, and if she felt the blow as deeply as David did, sorrow may have brought her sin home to her. But we cannot think that Solomon owed much that was good either in his disposition or in his early training to the weak and erring woman whom he honoured as his mother.

3. THE BELOVED OF HIS FATHER. That Solomon was the beloved of his mother we may be sure, because he was her eldest child that lived, and because all the grief which she had felt for the child that died went to increase her love for the child that lived. But he was also the beloved of his father. David was full of affection towards his sons, an affection which not even the wicked and unnatural conduct of some among them could destroy.^a But David seems to have regarded Solomon from the first with peculiar affection as the child of his royal state, as the child of his favourite wife, most of all as the child of promise—the child whom God had given him to carry out the Divine purpose, and the most cherished ambition of his own heart.^b

4. THE BELOVED OF GOD. All the circumstances which attended Solomon's birth conspired to point him out for future dignity; yet all these advantages might have been set aside by the course of events, and Solomon might have changed places in history with Nathan^c or another of his brothers. One thing, however, could never be set aside; one thing in his favour was absolutely decisive, "The Lord loved him."^d The Lord, who was the supreme

^a 2 Sam. xiii. 36, 39; xviii. 32, 33.

^b 2 Sam. vii. 13; 1 Chron. xxii. 7-10.

^c Nathan makes no figure in the history of Israel. Yet in the secret counsels of God he was reserved for higher honour than Solomon himself, for the Messiah traced his earthly pedigree from him (Luke iii. 31). Comp. Zech. xii. 12.

^d 2 Sam. xii. 24.

invisible monarch of Israel, whose viceroy and servant David was, set His love and His choice upon the child of Bathsheba, and called him from his earliest infancy to be the ruler of His people Israel. Some years before Solomon was born, David had been very anxious to begin building a Temple for the Ark of God. Nathan the prophet, however, had brought him a message from God that it was not for him to build this Temple ; that a son should be born to him whose life should have no ups and downs like his father's ; that God would adopt him as His own child, and give to him a sure kingdom ; and that he should build the Temple which David had proposed. That this prophecy did in part look on beyond Solomon to the greater and truer Son of David we know,^a but as far as the present time was concerned Solomon was clearly pointed out as the child in whom this glorious promise should be fulfilled. Thus was he called to the highest fortunes, not only by the circumstances of his birth, not only by the affection and wish of his father, but also by the counsel and election of God.

5. SOLOMON'S NAMES. The child whose birth was so full of comfort and of promise was called by his father Solomon,^b "the Peaceful." This name itself seems to have come indirectly from God ;^c but we may certainly take it as expressing his father's hope and faith that this child should have a happier and a holier, because a more peaceful life than he had led. David knew by experience the dangers and drawbacks which a career of strife had brought to his own spiritual life. Perhaps he did not sufficiently estimate those other dangers and drawbacks which belong to prosperity and peace. At any rate, he did but express one of the best instincts of mankind in praying that his son's triumphs might be

^a Heb. i. 5. Comp. Luke i. 32.

^b In Hebrew, Sh'lomoh; in the Greek Version of the Seventy, Salōmōn; in N. T., Sōlōmōn.

^c 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

those of peace, not those of war. More directly, as it seems, this child of promise received from the Lord^a the name of Jedidiah, "the Beloved of Jehovah." This name, like "Emmanuel,"^b and certain others, was too sacred to be used in common life ; but no doubt it was treasured up in the hearts of those that loved him, and afterwards in his own, as the choicest of all the gifts with which that favoured life began. It was "by the hand of Nathan," the faithful prophet who had secured the life-long confidence of David by rebuking his crimes, that this pledge of the Divine favour was sent to David's child.

6. SOLOMON'S BOYHOOD. Of Solomon's early life we only know that, unlike the early life of his elder brothers, it was spent in the king's court at Jerusalem. For one brief period, indeed, the peaceful ease of his young life had to be abandoned for the dangers and terrors of sudden flight and hurried wandering. When his father fled from the face of Absalom, there can be little doubt that Bathsheba and her child accompanied him ;^c and the sorrows of those evil days must have fallen still more hardly upon the women and children than upon the warriors. Solomon was quite old enough at this time^d to share the sufferings and anxieties of those around him, and to remember the fierce excitement of that flight and that return to his dying day. With this exception we must think of him as growing up to manhood amidst such state and luxury as belonged to David's court. The state, indeed, was of a very simple kind, and the luxury was more in the way of

^a 2 Sam. xii. 25.

^b Isaiah vii. 14; Matt. i. 23. Comp. Isaiah ix. 6; Hosea i. 4, &c.; Zech. vi. 12. Some think that the name Jedidiah is alluded to in Psa. cxxvii. 2.

^c 2 Sam. xv. 16. There can be little doubt that jealousy of the favourite child Solomon prompted the rebellion of Absalom, and that Absalom would have slain him if he had found him.

^d The rebellion of Absalom was at least nine years after the crime of Amnon, and therefore more than nine years after Solomon's birth. 2 Sam. xiii. 23, 38; xiv. 28; xv. 7; where we should read "four" instead of "forty."

rude profusion than of refinement ; still we must always remember that Solomon was brought up in a king's court, and wore "soft clothing," and "fared sumptuously every day," after the fashion of the time. Three persons had more to do with him, and with his training, than any others : his father, his mother, the prophet Nathan ; and it is not difficult to trace the strong influence of each in the character which he afterwards displayed. In his father he had the noblest of all examples, for he would learn to recognise in him that union of fervent piety with manly strength and royal power of command which is so rare and so excellent. With his father he would go continually to the Tabernacle,^a and learn both to value the routine of sacrifice and to love the freer service of psalmody and prayer. From his father he would catch that enthusiasm for the House of God, and that ambition to build Him a Temple which David had vainly cherished. All the grand ideals which the father had been compelled by his faults or his misfortunes to leave unattempted, would be carefully impressed upon the mind of the son. But the boy would be also with his mother—in his childhood almost entirely so ; and that must have been a very different influence. The mother's influence in an eastern court is almost always bad, for she is not trained to think of anything higher for her child than the merest self-indulgence. We shall not wrong Bathsheba if we make sure that her ambition was to make her son's life as pleasant and as soft as possible, and to see his every wish gratified.^b Happily for Solomon, there was one man about David's court who had great influence both with his father and with his mother, and who used that influence for the best interests of the child. Nathan the prophet had

^a *i.e.*, the temporary sanctuary which David had made for the Ark within the city of Zion (2 Sam. vi. 17).

^b The fact that almost all the good kings of Judah had wicked sons is readily accounted for by the preponderating influence of the mother under the domestic system of the east.

always been devoted to the cause of the young prince, and to him was entrusted the care of his education. He occupied a position at court not unlike that of the chancellor and keeper of the king's conscience in mediæval Europe. He kept the "state papers" (such as they were) and wrote the annals of the kingdom.^a From the learning which Solomon afterwards displayed, we may be sure that he had been taught much in his early years—much which his father knew nothing about—much that was quite unusual for princes of that day to learn. No doubt he was of a singularly quick disposition, eager to pick up all sorts of information, ready to turn his mind to all manner of different subjects. And no doubt he had excellent instructors in Nathan, and in others of whom we know nothing.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *What right did the public opinion of the east recognise in a son to succeed to his father?*
2. *What advantage belonged to Solomon in this respect over his brothers?*
3. *What was the great distinction between his birth and training, and that, e.g., of Absalom?*
4. *What was the Divine promise to which Solomon was heir?*
5. *What duty and privilege came to him before he was born?*
6. *What names did he receive? what did they mean? and how are they distinguished?*
7. *What event disturbed the peace of his early years?*
8. *What three persons had most to do with his training?*
9. *What sort of influence would each of these have upon him?*
10. *What kind of office did Nathan hold in David's court?*

^a 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29. His position in the court may be seen from the narratives in 2 Sam. vii.; 1 Kings i. That Gad, and not Nathan, was sent to rebuke David in the matter of the census was probably due to the fact that the latter held an official position

CHAPTER II.

SOLOMON'S ACCESSION.

7. THE PRETENSIONS OF ADONIJAH. The right of Bathsheba's son to succeed to the undisputed throne and enlarged kingdom of David was founded, not only upon the natural expectation of the people, but also upon the Divine decree,^a and upon his father's solemn promise given to his mother at the time of his birth.^b This right had once been rudely challenged, and for a while set aside, by the rebellion of Absalom. It was again to be challenged with some appearance of success by another of his elder brothers. Ammon and Absalom had come to a violent end some years before : Chileab (or Daniel) was either dead or was otherwise withdrawn from public life : whatever rights might be supposed to belong to the first-born had descended upon Adonijah, the son of Haggith. Those rights indeed were of small account according to the ideas of that age, and could never have been fairly pressed against the claims of Solomon ; but Solomon was young, and was known from his very name to be unwarlike : David, who had always shown himself excessively indulgent towards Adonijah,^c had now apparently fallen into second childhood, and might be expected to give way without much difficulty. Where Absalom had only just failed, Adonijah might well hope to succeed. So he plotted for the throne of Israel just as his elder brother had plotted. Like him Adonijah was strikingly handsome, and like him he covered a vain and headstrong character with a popular manner and a pleasing address. He assumed therefore a state which was unmistakably intended to set forth the claims he made upon the throne. His chariots, such as only

^a 1 Chron. xvii. 12.^b 1 Kings i. 17.^c 1 Kings i. 6

kings used, ^a his mounted body-guard, his fifty men who ran before him ^b when he made his public appearances, all declared as plainly as his words that he intended to be king.

8. THE SUPPORTERS OF ADONIJAH. Nor did Adonijah fail to support his claims by something more substantial than mere parade. Warned by the failure of Absalom he succeeded in gaining over to his side two of the most conspicuous of the public servants of David, the very two who had done more than any others to set David on his throne, and to keep him there. The first of these was Joab, the nephew of David, the rough warrior who had been the captain of David's host for so many years. By fair means or by foul, with his master's sanction or without it, this man had cut off every domestic enemy, and subdued every foreign enemy that could be counted dangerous to the house of David. With all his insolence—an insolence due partly to old companionship, partly to a certain partnership in crime ^c—he had been faithful to his master at the most critical times, and had followed him through all his wanderings for forty years. Why he should have fallen from his loyalty now we do not know. No doubt the peaceful character of the young prince was not as much to his taste as the rougher and more soldier-like character of the elder brother. Probably too he felt that he would have no claims upon Solomon, and moreover despised him as the child of Bathsheba. ^d As to David, he may well have said to himself, that the aged king was really king no longer,

^a 1 Kings x. 29. Absalom had done the same (2 Sam. xv. 1). Otherwise the use of chariots by private persons seems to have been unknown at that time.

^b These forerunners were a striking feature of a royal progress. When Elijah wished to show especial honour to King Ahab, he ran before his chariot to the gate of the royal city (1 Kings xviii. 46).

^c 2 Sam. xi. 14-21.

^d To such an one as Joab the religious sanctions which consecrated Solomon from his birth would be unintelligible; the crimes which preceded it would be matter for bitter scorn.

and that it was best for all concerned that the government should be placed in younger and more vigorous hands. The second of the two who lent their support to Adonijah's schemes was Abiathar, the priest. This man, even more than Joab, had been bound up with the lowest fortunes of David, and had done more than any one else to save him from destruction and despair. The great-great-grandson of Eli,^a and head of the priestly line descended from Ithamar, the son of Aaron,^b he had escaped from Nob when Doeg had slain the priests by command of Saul.^c Taking refuge with David he had remained at his side, visibly representing the favour of the national religion and of the national priesthood. He it was, no doubt, who had anointed David by the will of the people at Hebron.^d In after years, however, David had exercised that supreme power which the anointed kings of Israel claimed from the first as vicegerents of God, not only over the State but over the Church of Israel. He had associated with his old friend and companion in affliction another priest who represented a rival interest,^e and who was destined first to take precedence of him,^f and finally to supersede him altogether.^g Abiathar remained faithful to David at the time of Absalom's rebellion, and did him good service: it was only natural, however, that his mind should be to some extent alienated, and when a change seemed imminent he did not feel himself bound by David's choice of a successor.

^a 1 Sam. xiv. 3; xxii. 20.

^b 1 Chron. xxiv. 3, where for "Ahimelech" it is usual to read "Abiathar." There is, however, no other reference to the descent of Abiathar and Eli from Ithamar, and it is a question how much is meant by the distinction between the "sons of Phinehas," and the "sons of Ithamar." ^c 1 Sam. xxii. 18-23. ^d 2 Sam ii. 4.

^e Zadok does not appear until after the union of the whole kingdom (2 Sam. viii. 17). He may have been connected with the northern portion, and have been associated with Abiathar for political reasons. According to the genealogies he represented the elder priestly line descended from Eleazar (1 Chron. vi. 4-8).

^f Zadok is always mentioned first, as in 2 Sam. xv.

^g 1 Kings ii. 35. In Ezekiel the "sons of Zadok" only are recognized as priests (Ezek. xliii. 19; xlv. 15, &c.)

9. THE CONSPIRACY OF ADONIJAH. These two supporters might well seem to Adonijah to secure the success of his enterprise, and accordingly he went on to proclaim himself king in the royal city itself. In the narrow valley of the brook Kedron, to the east of the city of David, and to the south of the hill on which the Temple afterwards stood, there is a natural spring—the only one in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It went by the name of **En Rogel** (“The Fuller’s Spring”). A little way to the east, overhanging the narrow valley, was a large flat rock called **Zohemoth**. Here Adonijah held a sacrificial feast, slaying the sheep and oxen upon the rock **Zohemoth**. To this feast he invited all the king’s sons^a—in themselves a numerous company—and all the men of Judah who had been in the service of the king. Adonijah, representing the elder family born at Hebron, claimed especially the allegiance of Judah, and appealed to that tribal jealousy which was so easily aroused.^b As the guests ate the flesh and drank the wine provided by Adonijah, they felt themselves pledged to support his claims; nothing seemed to stand in the way of immediate success; David and Solomon were forgotten; they shouted, “Long life to King Adonijah.”

10. THE INTERVENTION OF NATHAN AND BATHSHEBA. Adonijah did not know that there was a mightier power in Israel than that of soldier or of priest. The prophetic office in the person of Nathan then, as in that of Samuel before, and of so many others afterwards, asserted itself as the most direct representative of the Divine will. At every turning-point of the national history a prophet of the Lord was found to say to prince and people, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Nathan had not, indeed, on this occasion the unhesitating boldness

^a The king’s younger sons born in Jerusalem of his numerous wives are probably intended (1 Chron. iii. 6-9). The other sons of Bathsheba may have been included.

^b 2 Sam. xix. 42, 43.

which marked the conduct of the other prophets, and *had* marked his own.^a He did not venture to force his way into the presence of King David. Perhaps he had become too much of the courtier; perhaps he rightly judged that he could secure his object more surely in a more roundabout way. He sought out Bathsheba, told her of the pressing danger, and bade her go at once to David and remind him of the oath he had sworn to her in favour of her son. Bathsheba had not seen the king for a long time, for he was to all appearance in his dotage, and was ministered to by other hands. She entered the king's chamber, however, as a suppliant, and told him in simple words what had happened, and how all men looked to him to regulate the succession to his throne. While she was speaking Nathan entered, according to previous agreement, and confirmed her tale, adding that he himself, and Zadok, and Benaiah, the captain of the bodyguard,^b and Solomon had not been invited to Adonijah's banquet; in conclusion, he demanded whether David had really sanctioned these proceedings without letting him know.

11. THE ANOINTING OF SOLOMON. These startling tidings aroused the old monarch once more to all his former energy. Calling for Bathsheba, who had retired, he renewed his solemn oath in favour of her son. Then sending for Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, he bade them place Solomon on the royal mule, and take him down to Gihon,^c a place at

^a 2 Sam. xii. 1, 7.

^b 2 Sam. xxiii. 23. The king's guard consisted of Cherethites and Pelethites, foreign mercenaries (2 Sam. xx. 23). The former were recruited from one of the tribes of the Philistine coast (1 Sam. xxx. 14; Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5). In the two latter places the name is rendered "Cretans" by the Greek Version of the Seventy. They may have been settlers from Crete. The Pelethites were probably Philistines, the one name being perhaps a contraction for the other.

^c The site of Gihon is quite uncertain. It was a fountain; but there is now no other fountain near Jerusalem but that identified with En Rogel. Gihon was evidently at a distance from En Rogel, and must now have ceased to flow. Its waters were subsequently conveyed by an underground channel into the city of David (2 Chron. xxxii. 30), and the upper part of its valley was included within the walls of Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxxiii. 14, but the translation is doubtful).

that time outside the city, proclaim him king, and anoint him publicly as the successor of David. Benaiah having reverently and heartily expressed his assent, the king's orders were immediately carried out. The foreign mercenaries could be trusted to obey their commander implicitly, and the people of Jerusalem were too deeply attached to David to dispute his will. Zadok fetched an horn of holy oil from the Tabernacle,^a and anointed Solomon; the blowing of trumpets, and the shouts of the people whom the spectacle had attracted to the spot, gave notice that the ceremony was completed. At this very moment the feast which Adonijah and his friends had made was coming to an end; and in the pause which followed, the unusual sounds of music and of shouting reached their ears from the city. They had not long to wait for an explanation. Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, who had himself once helped to save the king's life at the risk of his own, and was no doubt familiar with many inmates of the palace, reported to them fully not only the public events which had caused the rejoicing in the city, but also the private words of David and of his men. So the conspirators, finding themselves completely outwitted, gave up at once all thought of success in their enterprise, and hastened to consult their own safety. Adonijah fled to the Tabernacle for sanctuary, appealing to the young king only to spare his life. Solomon readily granted his prayer, on condition of his good behaviour, and, after receiving his submission in person, dismissed him to his own house.

12. SOLOMON'S INSTRUCTIONS IN THE KINGDOM (1 Kings ii.; 1 Chron. xxii., xxviii., xxix.). The young king was now, for all practical purposes, the monarch of Israel, although the government was still carried on in David's name. But on

^a The Tabernacle here and elsewhere in this part of the narrative is the tent which David pitched for the Ark on Mount Zion.

a certain day, not long before he died, David was able to rouse himself from the lethargy into which he had fallen, and to speak in his old firm tones of counsel and command to Solomon, and to the assembled heads of the people. In this charge he rehearsed the Divine intimations which had pointed out Solomon as his successor, and as the future builder of the Temple for which he had made such costly preparation,^a besought him earnestly to walk in the way of the Lord, and charged the princes and people to aid and support him therein. At the same time, he gave to Solomon the plans of the future Temple, and of its ritual, as they had shaped themselves in his pious meditations; and made over to his care the masses of gold and silver provided for the Temple furniture. He then invited offerings from the chiefs and princes for the house of God, and having received them, offered them to God with prayer and thanksgiving and blessing. All that were present then united in one solemn act of adoration,^b in which the old king was included as the visible vicegerent and representative of God upon earth. Sacrifices were offered in great profusion, and amidst the feast that followed, Solomon was again and more publicly instituted to the kingdom of his father David, which was also "the throne of the Lord."^c David, however, had yet some more private instructions for his son and heir. He charged him to show kindness to the sons of Barzillai,^d and also to execute deserved justice upon Joab and upon Shimei. Shortly afterwards, as it appears, the old man died, and Solomon was left to reign without any external

^a The figures given in 1 Chron. xxii. 14 amount to something like twelve hundred million pounds of our money. A mistake seems to have got into the text, but we have no means of knowing how it arose. The numbers given in the Books of Chronicles have to be compared with those given in the Books of Kings.

^b 1 Chron. xxix. 20, compare Ps. xlv. 11. The same expression is used of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 6) and Bathsheba (1 Kings i. 31) before David, and of the Persians before Haman (Esther iii. 2-5).

^c 1 Chron. xxix. 23; xxviii. 5.

^d 2 Sam. xvii. 27; xix. 37.

restraint, and without any rival in the affectionate loyalty of the nation.^a

13. SOLOMON'S ENEMIES CUT OFF (1 Kings ii.). It is the sad necessity of eastern despotisms that they can only be made secure by the violent death of all who seem dangerous to their peace. The kingdom of Israel was on its human side such a despotism,^b and had to rely for its safety upon the same stern measures of precaution and repression as were usual elsewhere. Solomon, therefore, was justified by the ideas of the day, and perhaps by the necessities of the case, in putting to death his unhappy brother Adonijah, when he began to intrigue with people about the court. Adonijah had gone in a very humble way to Solomon's mother, and had begged of her to procure him the hand of Abishag, who had ministered to the late king in his old age. Bathsheba had foolishly consented to lay his request before Solomon. Solomon, however, was very angry:^c he thought he saw in this apparently harmless request a plot against his own throne, and he felt certain that Joab and Abiathar, the former confederates of Adonijah, had some hand in it too. So he sent Benaiah, the captain of the guard, and the unhappy man was slain at once. Of the two others who had awaked the royal suspicion, Abiathar was

^a Solomon's age at his accession is uncertain. The expressions used about him (1 Chron. xxii. 5; xxix. 1) are also used of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xiii. 7) at a time when he was more than forty. It is evident that he was not born until the residence and government of David had been for some time established in Jerusalem. On the other hand, 1 Kings xiv. 21; 2 Chron. xii. 13, compared with 1 Kings xi. 42; 2 Chron. ix. 30, show that Rehoboam was born before his father's accession. The historian Josephus asserts (Ant. viii. 7) that Solomon came to the throne at the age of fourteen, but his statements on matters of history are not to be relied on. It was, however, not unlikely that Solomon, brought up as he was, was married at a very early age. We may suppose him to have been between sixteen and twenty when his father died.

^b The fact that foreign mercenaries supported the throne speaks for itself.

^c It has been supposed that Solomon had some personal feeling in favour of Abishag, and she has been identified with "the Shulamite" of Solomon's Song (vi. 13). But this is not at all probable.

spared for the sake of old associations and his sacred office, but he was banished to Anathoth, where his family property lay, a few miles north of Jerusalem. He now ceased to share with Zadok the priestly office about the Ark, and in this degradation men thought they saw a fresh fulfilment of the terrible judgment which had been threatened against the house of Eli.^a Joab was more hardly dealt with, as indeed he deserved, for he had committed more than one cowardly murder,^b and only the weakness of the late king had permitted him to escape punishment. By the law of Moses an unpunished murder was a standing offence against the God of Israel,^c and Solomon would have been guilty of a veritable crime if he had not requited his evil deeds. Joab, hearing of the fate of Adonijah, fled for refuge to the Altar, and would not quit it. The Altar of the Lord, however, afforded no protection to a murderer;^d Benaiah slew him at the king's command, and succeeded to his post as captain over all the host of Israel. One more remained of those who had been marked down for vengeance, as opportunity should arise. Shimei still troubled the conscience of the young king, for he had uttered words of cursing and blasphemy against that kingdom which was a part of the Divine rule upon earth.^e This was an offence not only against David as an individual, but also against the God of Israel, whose representative David was. Solomon, therefore, felt himself bound by piety towards God, and by respect for his father's injunctions, to deal severely with Shimei. Nor, as always happens in such cases, was an excuse long wanting for taking his life also. He was ordered to live in Jerusalem under the eye of the king's servants, on pain of death if he quitted it. He did quit it after three years, in

^a 1 Sam. ii. 31-35; xxii. 16-19.

^c Numb. xxxv. 30-33.

^b 2 Sam. iii. 27; xx. 10.

^d Exodus xxi. 14.

^e 1 Kings xxi. 10, 13. Even in the kingdom of Ahab to "blaspheme God and the king" was legally accounted one thing, and was punishable with death (Ex. xxii. 28).

pursuit of some runaway slaves. On the fact being notified to the king, he was summoned into Solomon's presence, reproached, condemned, and slain. Solomon herein showed no generosity and no mercy ; but he would have said that generosity was out of place towards his father's enemy, and mercy out of place towards the enemy of God. He was the minister of the Divine vengeance, which cannot sleep.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR INQUIRY.

1. *What claim had Adonijah on the throne of Israel ?*
2. *Whom did he gain over to his enterprise ?*
3. *What reason had Joab, what reason had Abiathar, to be discontented ?*
4. *What steps did Adonijah take to make himself king ?*
5. *How was his scheme frustrated ?*
6. *Who were the leaders of the party devoted to Solomon ?*
7. *What effect did these events have on David ?*
8. *What was the nature (a) of David's public charge, (b) of his private instructions to Solomon ?*
9. *What was the offence of Adonijah which brought about his death ?*
10. *What was the sin and what the fate (a) of Joab, (b) of Shimei, (c) of Abiathar ?*
11. *What prophecy was called to mind by the disgrace of the last ?*
12. *Who were the king's guards ? and what does their employment serve to show ?*

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY YEARS OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

14. MARRIAGE ALLIANCE WITH EGYPT (1 Kings iii.). Solomon was now free from all uneasiness at home, and was undisputed master of the large territories which his father's victories had reduced to obedience and to order. He now looked abroad, and resolved to strengthen his position amongst princes by seeking in marriage the daughter of Pharaoh. Egypt was at this time the most powerful, because the most civilised and wealthy, country in the world ; but it was not always united under one crown, and the Pharaoh whose daughter became Solomon's queen was perhaps ruler only over the northern division. ^a This marriage, then, was a political marriage, of a kind quite different from anything that had been known in Israel before. Jewish leaders from the time of Moses downwards ^b had had no scruples in marrying foreigners, but their marriages had had no political significance. Solomon's union with Pharaoh's daughter meant that he was more or less the equal of Pharaoh ; that he belonged to the order of kings ; and that he was prepared to deal with neighbouring kingdoms as they were used to deal with one another. The relations of neighbouring countries then, as now, were governed by a strange mixture of policy and force, of open friendship and of secret suspicion ; and Israel had to pay the penalty of its rise to greatness

^a As far as can be ascertained at present, it was a Pharaoh of the twenty-first or Tanitic dynasty whose daughter Solomon married. That dynasty reigned from B.C. 1110 to B.C. 980, and was succeeded by another hostile dynasty of Assyrian origin nine years before Solomon's death.

^b Numb. xii. 1 ; Matt. i. 5 ; Ruth iv. 10 ; 2 Sam. iii. 3. The Israelites were forbidden in the law to marry Canaanites (Deut. vii. 3), but the prohibition seems to have been disregarded in the cases of Rahab and Maachah.

by becoming entangled in these relations. It was no doubt a wonderful advance for the little inland state of Israel, so lately recovered from utter feebleness and anarchy, to have made. The alliance of its king with the daughter of Pharaoh must have seemed to confer upon it an immense importance for the present, and a most valuable security for the future. When the heads of the people welcomed the foreign princess to her new home in Jerusalem, they felt that their fathers had been more than justified in demanding from God a king who would put them on a level with other countries. In point of fact, however, it is doubtful whether this alliance brought any happiness to Solomon, or any advantage to his country beyond the possession of the ruined frontier town of Gezer, which Pharaoh had taken from the Philistines and now restored to Israel. The foreign princess, accustomed to live in great pomp, maintained her separate establishment, first in the city of David,^a and afterwards in the palace which Solomon built for her. Surrounded by her own servants,^b and probably practising her own religious rites, she remained an alien in the midst of Israel,^c and marred the ideal unity of the chosen race in its most representative household. Nor did the worldly policy which prompted the alliance justify itself by success. Before the end of Solomon's life the reigning Pharaoh held himself perfectly free to treat him with hostility. In attracting the notice of Egypt, and in entering into political relations with her, Israel gained nothing but a powerful neighbour always jealous and generally hostile.

15. SOLOMON'S PIETY. Whatever seeds of future trouble may have lain in the young king's policy, he was himself at this time sincerely and pro-

^a 1 Kings iii. 1; 2 Chron. vii. 11.

^b Psalm xlv. 14.

^c 2 Chron. vii. 11 shows clearly that she was regarded as an alien in a religious sense. She could not, as a heathen, be allowed to enter the palace of David, which had been sanctified by the presence of the Ark.

foundly religious. He loved the Lord,^a and he loved to worship the Lord with all the outward profusion and variety which could express the fervour of his inward devotion. At this time, as for many long years afterwards, men still sacrificed in "high places," *i.e.*, in spots which for some reason or other had come to be looked upon as sacred. The law which is embodied in the Book of Deuteronomy restricted the sacrificial worship of Jehovah to one place.^b But the practice had been—and that with the Divine sanction^c—to offer also at other places than a single centre. Solomon frequented these high places, which the religious associations of many generations had sanctified, with offerings of sacrifices and of incense. The most popular and esteemed of the "high places" at that time was at Gibeon, a place seven miles north-north-west of Jerusalem where the Tabernacle erected by Moses,^d and the brazen altar of sacrifice still remained. According to 1 Chron. xvi. 39-42, sacrificial and choral service had been maintained here during the later years of David. Hither Solomon came and offered no less than a thousand victims at one time upon the brazen altar.

16. SOLOMON'S DREAM (1 Kings iii ; 2 Chron. i.). In the night after the great sacrifice Solomon enjoyed a blessed revelation of the favour of God. The Lord appeared to him in a dream, and bade him ask whatever he most desired. He, pleading the greatness of the charge and of the responsibility laid upon him, and his own youth and inexperience, asked for that practical wisdom which he needed so much if he was to do justice and judgment as a good king ought. Such practical wisdom is, ordinarily speaking, out of the reach of a young monarch,

^a 1 Kings iii. 3.

^b Deut. xii. 2-14; cf. Lev. xvii. 3-6.

^cAs *e.g.* in the case of Gideon, Judg. vi. 26; Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 9; David, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25.

^d It is not necessary to suppose that the identical curtains and boards remained; many, if not all, of the materials must in any case have been renewed in the course of five hundred years.

because it only springs from a combination of shrewd good sense with much experience of men and matters. This request was very pleasing to God, because it showed that Solomon thought first and foremost of his duty towards his people. Therefore God commended his choice, and promised him not only the practical wisdom he had asked for, but the riches and honour which he had not asked for, and long life too provided he spent it well. In thankful remembrance of this revelation Solomon returned to Jerusalem and worshipped before the Ark, offering many sacrifices, and making a great feast.

17. SOLOMON'S JUDGMENT (1 Kings iii.). It was not long before a case came before the king which illustrated in a remarkable way the practical wisdom which he had asked of God, and which made a very deep impression upon the people. One day when he was sitting as usual to hear any difficult cases that were brought to him for judgment, there came two poor women and stood before him. One had a living infant in her arms, and the other a dead infant. The latter accused the former of having accidentally killed her own child and then stolen the other child, putting the dead child in its place while its own mother slept. This the other woman denied, asserting that the infant which she carried was really her own. There were no witnesses who could speak to the truth of the facts. A modern judge must have dismissed the case for want of evidence, and so have inflicted a cruel wrong upon the true mother. Solomon however was shrewd enough to see a way of getting at the truth. He ordered that the child in dispute should be cut in two and divided between the women. The stratagem succeeded, for the true mother pleaded that the child's life might be spared at any cost to herself, while the pretended mother was content that it should be killed. Such insight into human nature, and such readiness of resource, so successfully displayed, touched the

imagination of Israel wonderfully. It was just on a level with the tenderest and keenest feelings of their every-day life. It was just what they liked, and what they wanted, in "the Judge of Israel."^a As the incident was repeated and applauded in a thousand villages, men felt sure that their young monarch had indeed the wisdom which is from above.

18. THE EXTENT OF HIS DOMINIONS. It had been the glory of David that he fought successfully with all the enemies of Israel on every side, and subdued them. It was the greater glory of Solomon (as his name foretold) that he reigned peaceably and without dispute over a wide territory inhabited by many tribes, whose chiefs and princes all acknowledged him as their over lord. Thus the benefits of his peaceful sway, and of the civilisation it fostered, were extended to all the nations between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates, and the ancient promise made to Abraham was fulfilled.^b The Philistines, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, who had inflicted so many injuries upon Israel, were for the present either thoroughly crushed or reduced to a condition of humble dependence. The Hittites, so far as they dwelt among the nations of Canaan, had shared the same fate, and were reduced to bondage; so far as they formed petty states outside the proper borders of Israel,^c to the north and north-east, they retained their separate existence, but paid homage and tribute to Solomon. The same was the case with the Syrian principalities which David had overthrown in more than one campaign.^d Damascus indeed, the most ancient of all the Syrian cities, does not seem ever to have been occupied by the

^a Micah v. 1.

^b Gen. xv. 18.

^c The head-quarters of the Hittites, or Kheta as they are called in the Egyptian inscriptions, seem to have been on the upper Orontes—the land of Hamath. The "kings of the Hittites" (1 Kings x. 29) must be looked for in the mountain valleys of this district.

^d 2 Sam. viii.

forces of Israel; ^a if it ever was, it was lost again almost immediately. ^b With this exception the whole region of Palestine and Syria obeyed King Solomon, and was kept in easy subjection by the military and commercial posts which he established in outlying places. It does not seem that he ever needed to undertake any warlike enterprise. The only one ever ascribed to him ^c was connected with one of the Syrian dependencies in the far north, and was probably in the nature of a royal progress to receive the submission of tribes which had threatened to rebel. What David had reduced by force of arms it was the part of Solomon to strengthen and consolidate by the arts of peace and the blessings of good government.

19. THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS DOMINIONS (1 Kings iv.). Solomon's rule was at the best—*i.e.*, as it was felt by his own people in the mid-day of his prosperity—an absolutism; and it shared of necessity all the drawbacks of such a form of government. Everything depended upon his will, and was made to minister to his greatness. Independence of any kind was checked, and all political virtue was turned into the one channel of obedience to the king. ^d This was something very different from the national life which the invisible King of Israel had chosen for His people at the first. Had the national life developed upon the lines laid down in the law of Moses, Israel would have remained a confederacy of independent tribes united by a common religion, and guided by the authority of a single priesthood. Such a system, however impracticable it might be considered, would have preserved the largest possible amount of local and tribal liberty. But the nation scouted the Divine ideal, and demanded to be organ-

^a 2 Sam. viii. 5, 6, seems careful not to state that Damascus itself was taken; and this is more plain in the Greek Version of the Seventy.

^b 1 Kings xi. 24.

^c 2 Chron. viii. 3.

^d This is abundantly shown in the Book of Proverbs (xvi. 14, 15 xix 12; xxiv. 21; xxx. 31). Compare also Ecclesiastes (viii. 2, 4; x. 20).

ized as a monarchy, like the nations of this world.^a Since a despotism was inevitable, God Himself accepted the necessity, and in His mercy made it as beneficent as a despotism could be. He gave to David and Solomon such gifts and graces as are most needful for the rulers of men, and as long as they were really wise and loyal to their Master in heaven, their despotism served the interests of Israel better than any other form of government then possible. David's authority indeed had always been limited by the necessities of war, and by his own relations with his old companions in arms. In his later years, however, the government of his dominions had been greatly centralized and organized after the fashion of oriental monarchs. Solomon had nothing to do but to complete the political organization of the kingdom he inherited, and to bring every part and every corner of it under the direct control of his own chief officers. For this purpose he ventured to set aside the old tribal divisions,^b and mapped out Israel and Judah into twelve districts which only partially corresponded to the ancient boundaries. Over these districts he set twelve officers, whose principal duty was to gather tribute in kind for the support of the court and following of the king, and of the workmen employed in public works. Each district supplied provision for one month; and while men were protected in the peaceful enjoyments of their lands, and no other burden was laid upon them, this tax was light and reasonable. No doubt these twelve officers exercised other functions in their respective districts, and represented the royal authority for all political purposes.^c The general control over all these officers was entrusted to Azariah, the son of Nathan, while

^a 1 Sam. viii. 5-19; Hosea xiii. 9-11.

^b These had been to a great extent obliterated by time; the one division which did exist in popular sentiment was that between the south under the name and headship of Judah, and the north under the headship of Ephraim (2 Sam. ii. 4; v. 3; xix. 41; xxiv. 9).

^c Two of them were married to daughters of Solomon (1 Kings iv 11, 15).

his brother Zabud held the offices of "principal officer"^a and of "king's friend." If this Nathan was the prophet who had done so much to secure the throne for Solomon, we can well understand why his sons were promoted to great honour, both for their father's sake, and for their own, as having been the companions of Solomon's youth. The title of "king's friend" had been given to Hushai^c in David's lifetime, and points clearly to that system of private influence in affairs of state which must always exist in a despotism, and is least harmful when most openly recognised. We do not know exactly what was intended by the title conferred upon Zabud, and upon another Azariah.^d It seems to have carried with it ecclesiastical dignity, and we know that Solomon looked upon himself as being in every sense the head of the Jewish Church by virtue of the Divine choice and consecration. Amongst other principal officials who presided over various departments of state were two "scribes" or secretaries,^e a "recorder" or chancellor, and a superintendent of levies; the two last had held the same offices in the later years of David's reign.^f All these were officers of peace, and their very titles mark the character of Solomon's reign; they belong to an era of centralisation and of material prosperity, when all things in Church and State are done well, but are done from the palace and for the palace.

20. THE STATE OF HIS DOMINIONS. The

^a Translated so in our version. The Hebrew word, however, is the usual term for "priest."

^b So Rehoboam preferred the counsel of the young men his companions (1 Kings xii. 8). It is disputed, however, whether this Nathan is the prophet or David's son.

^c 2 Sam. xv. 37; 1 Chron. xxvii. 33.

^d 1 Kings iv. 2. "The priest" does not belong grammatically to "Zadok," but to Azariah. The Greek Version omits the word "priest" here, and in ver. 5, in order to avoid the difficulty.

^e These two secretaries seem to have been sons of David's secretary (2 Sam. viii. 17; xx. 25).

^f 2 Sam. xx. 24. Adoniram seems to be the same name as Adoram (1 Kings xii. 18).

immediate effect of the peaceful and vigorous government of Solomon upon the land and people of Israel was to produce an extraordinary outburst of prosperity. When peace comes to a people naturally industrious, but harassed by long wars, it is always marked by a great advance in wealth; but when peace is accompanied by victory, and victory by the opening up of an extensive commerce and the undertaking of great public works, wealth advances with incredible swiftness. The later years of David had sufficed to repair the ravages of war, famine, and pestilence. The early years of Solomon witnessed an immense increase of population.^a If population increased fast, wealth increased faster still. Enormous sums drawn from subject races, or earned by commercial enterprise, were spent among the people, and money became very plentiful amongst all classes. Trade-routes were occupied with caravans. Posts of profit were filled by Israelites at home and abroad. The extraordinary capacity for making money which had hitherto lain dormant in the race now ripened all at once in the stimulating atmosphere of national security and success. The very profusion of Solomon's undertakings, and the systematic vigour with which he drained the wealth of the country, tended at first to increase the general prosperity. It provided employment, created large demands, and aroused ambitions not known before. It set before the eyes of the people those spectacles of splendour and of lavish enjoyment which give ardour and purpose to the pursuits of industry. For the first time all Israel dwelt in peace and plenty, every man in his portion, in a land which flowed with milk and honey. Whether the fulfilment of the Divine promise,^b so long delayed, came at last in the way and in the sense which God intended, may well be

^a From the figures given in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, the population of all Israel may be set down as more than four millions. It may well have doubled itself in the next thirty years.

^b Gen. xxii. 17; Deut. viii. 8-9; xxviii. 11-13

doubted ; but at the time men saw in it the manifest hand of God, and they praised God and the king.

21. THE ALLIANCE WITH HIRAM. If David and Solomon had held themselves bound by the strictness of the Mosaic law, they must have waged war against the Phœnicians, who occupied a most important part of the territory originally assigned to Israel.^a They did not, however, hold themselves bound to attack Tyre and Sidon ; on the contrary, they made it part of their policy to cultivate the most friendly relations with them. Here again we may doubt whether Solomon's policy was wise in the highest sense, because it paved the way for the subsequent connection between the reigning houses of Tyre and Israel, and for the introduction of the foul idolatries of Baal. At the time, however, and as a part of the worldly wisdom of Solomon, a close alliance with these wealthy ports seemed of incalculable advantage to both peoples. Then, as ever,^b the Phœnicians depended for their supplies of food upon the country behind them, while the trade-routes taken by their caravans could at any time have been blocked by the outposts of the King of Israel. On the other hand, Israel had no outlet for her agricultural produce, and scarcely any access to the sea,^c except through the cities of Phœnice. Moreover, King Hiram of Tyre could supply his neighbour with what he most eagerly desired at that time, viz., excellent timber for building, and skilled labour to use it. When, therefore, Hiram sent an embassy to congratulate Solomon on his accession, the young king met his advances with eagerness, and bespoke his active assistance for the great project of which his mind was full, asking for cedar trees from Lebanon, and promising to pay for the skilled labour

^a Numb. xxxiv. 6-8; Judges i. 31.

^b Acts xii. 20.

^c The only sea-port possessed by Israel was Joppa, and this, although available for certain purposes (2 Chron. ii. 16; Jonah i. 3), could never be made a convenient port or station for ships.

which Hiram could place at his disposal. Hiram was very glad when he received this message, and sent back word that he would do all that Solomon wanted in the hewing and transporting of timber, if Solomon on his side would supply him with food. So they made a treaty : Hiram gave as many cedar and fir trees as were wanted, and Solomon gave some 20,000 quarters of wheat and a certain quantity of the finest oil.^a The two sovereigns remained on the most friendly terms^b throughout their lives.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF INQUIRY.

1. *What was the nature of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh?*
2. *What was the actual result of the alliance?*
3. *Where did Pharaoh's daughter reside?*
4. *Where did Solomon offer sacrifices? What authority had he for doing so?*
5. *What was there to give sanctity to Gibeon?*
6. *What did Solomon desire to receive from God? and what did God promise him?*
7. *What difficult case was brought to him for decision? and with what result?*
8. *How far did Solomon's empire extend? and how was it kept together?*
9. *What were Solomon's chief officers of state?*
10. *What was the effect of his government on the condition of the people?*
11. *How did Solomon regard the Phœnicians?*
12. *What were the terms of the treaty between him and Hiram?*

^a In 1 Kings v. 11 it is stated at 20 "cor" (about 1200 gallons), which may seem small in comparison with the quantity of wheat. It was, however, to be "beaten" oil—oil of the purest quality. The Greek Version has 20,000 "baths" (about 120,000 gallons).

^b Ps. xlv. 12 apparently refers to an embassy bearing presents at the time of Solomon's marriage.

CHAPTER IV.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

22. PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING (1 Chron. xxii., xxviii., xxix.). "But Solomon built him an house."^a Thus spake the martyr Stephen of Him who needed no house, and yet was willing (for His people's sake) to dwell in one. This was the glory of Solomon, more than all his riches, power, pomp, and wisdom. The Scripture narrative of his reign is mainly taken up with the Temple, and this does really correspond to the truth of things, for the Temple which Solomon built became more and more the fixed centre of the national religious life of Israel, and that national religious life was the germ which has expanded into the spiritual life of Christendom. In building that Temple Solomon was doing far more than he had any idea of himself: he was providing an outward shrine for the worship of the living God; and that worship, transfigured and spiritualized, but yet retaining its conscious identity, was to become the universal religion of the world. It was the Temple which made Jerusalem "the joy of the whole earth:"^b it was the Temple which gave to Jerusalem an everlasting name, a name which has passed over to the future abode of the saints.^c The idea of building a permanent abode for the presence of the Lord God of Israel—for the Ark and the other sacred symbols of Judaism—was David's. Before him none thought of such a thing. The Ark of God, in charge of a priestly family or guild, had seemed both safer and more useful while it could be moved about from place to place as the troubles of those times demanded. But the misfortunes which befell the Ark^d caused men to

^a Acts vii. 47.
^c Rev. xxi. 2.

^b Ps. xlviil. 2.
^d 1 Sam. iv. 11; vi. 1

tremble for its safety, and the new stability which came with the possession of Jerusalem invited them to enshrine there the chief symbol of their faith. David accordingly ventured after long delay to fetch the Ark into Jerusalem and to place it in a temporary tabernacle or tent,^a whilst he collected means and materials for a splendid and permanent Temple. He indeed was himself forbidden to build, on moral grounds;^b and moreover we may easily perceive that David had not the advantages which made Solomon the great builder of his age. He employed himself in collecting great stores of gold and silver, of brass and iron, and of other things which would be needed to make the future Temple exceeding magnificent.^c Solomon, however, did not find himself at once in a position to build. Whatever David may have provided in the way of hewn stone and timber,^d Solomon's ideas went far beyond his father's. Moreover, the Hebrews had no practice and no skill in architecture. They have indeed never built anything which has a distinctively Hebrew character. The glorious Temple upon which our Lord Himself gazed with melancholy admiration was the work of a foreigner,^e and owed nothing to Jewish ideas but its internal arrangements. And so far as Solomon's Temple was a work of art, and an object of beauty, it was due to the influence of Phœnician taste, and the skill of Phœnician workmen.^f Accordingly the king's great object in renewing the alliance with Tyre and in cultivating the friendship of Hiram, was to obtain what he wanted in material and in skill for the buildings which he had projected, and chiefly for the Temple. To this end he strained all the resources of his kingdom.

^a 2 Sam. vi. 2, 17

^b 1 Chron. xxii. 8.

^c 1 Chron. xxii. 5; xxix. 2.

^d 1 Chron. xxii. 2, 4.

^e Herod

^f The "patterns" mentioned in 1 Chron. xxviii. must have fixed the dimensions only of the various parts of the Temple, which were adapted from the sacred dimensions of the Tabernacle.

23. THE LEVY (1 Kings v.; 2 Chron. ii.). Solomon had agreed with Hiram that he should send a number of his own servants into Mount Lebanon to cut timber there together with the workmen sent from Tyre.^a These latter were in all probability slaves,^b who worked in gangs under Phœnician overseers, who directed and combined their labours. In order to get his part of the work carried out, Solomon had recourse to a system of forced labour, which was little better than wholesale slavery. First he drafted off the remnants of the old Canaanite tribes, to the number of 150,000,^c and made them to serve, apparently without respite, on the roads and in the quarries of Lebanon. The enormous fatigue of hewing and transporting, almost entirely by manual labour, vast trunks of trees and blocks of stone wore out the lives of these wretched men. Their work was superintended by overseers of their own race,^d as the work of the Israelites themselves had been in Egypt.^e Over these again there were Israelitish officers of a higher rank.^f But the burden of forced service did not fall only upon the remnant of the heathen. Either from the first, or else at a later date when fatigue and disease had thinned the ranks of his labourers, Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel.^g Certain classes were no doubt exempt, but the rest had to take their chance. For the first time the free-born Israelite found himself torn away from his home and his farm, not by an enemy, or a foreigner, but by his own rulers, to do hard and unaccustomed labour in the

^a 1 Kings v. 6.

^b The Phœnicians were essentially a maritime and commercial people, and were famous for the traffic they carried on in slaves (Ezek. xxvii. 13; Amos i. 9; Joel iii. 6).

^c 1 Kings v. 15. 2 Chron. ii. 2.

^d 2 Chron. ii. 18. These were evidently Canaanites, as a reference to the previous verse will show. The same men are apparently numbered as 3300 in 1 Kings v. 16.

^e Ex. v. 6, 15.

^f 1 Kings ix. 23; 2 Chron. viii. 10.

^g 1 Kings v. 13. The statement in 1 Kings ix. 22 (which is omitted by the Greek Version) and in 2 Chron. viii. 9 must be understood to mean that Solomon did not make actual slaves of his own people.

northern mountains. No doubt the Israelites were spared as much as was consistent with the nature of the work, and out of the 30,000 conscripts only one-third laboured for a month at a time. Nothing, however, could prevent the service being felt as a grievous hardship; and thus it came to pass that the very foundations of the Temple of the Most Merciful were laid in the liberties of the Israelites, and in the lives of their wretched vassals. The Phœnician workmen as well as his own were fed by King Solomon,^a and the transport of such immense quantities of corn and wine and oil into the mountains added very greatly to the expense and labour of the undertaking. Together with the servants of Hiram and Solomon were the Giblites, men of a neighbouring tribe celebrated for their skill in carpentry.^b By this reckless expenditure of labour both timber and stones of the finest quality and largest size were conveyed to Jerusalem: the timber came chiefly by sea as far as Joppa, the stones were transported all the way by land.

24. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE (1 Kings vi.; 2 Chron. iii.). In the second month of the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the work of preparation was so far advanced^c that an actual commencement was made with the building. The site on which it was to stand had been fixed years before by the appearance of the Lord to David at the time of the great plague.^d Where he had seen the angel standing between heaven and earth, with the drawn sword in his hand, there he had built an altar, and

^a 2 Chron. ii. 10. The present value of these quantities would be about £120,000.

^b 1 Kings v. 18. For "stone squarers" read Giblites or Gebalites, inhabitants of Gebal (Josh. xiii. 5 Ezek. xxvii. 9).

^c The Greek Version adds to 1 Kings v., "and they prepared the stones and the timber for three years." The date of the commencement of the Temple is given by the best authorities as 1007 B.C.; but it is not certain

^d 2 Chron. iii. 1.

determined that the future Temple should be built. It might seem as if the memory of so terrible a visitation were not a pleasant association for the national sanctuary. But the commanding nature of the site, coupled with the fact that it was a holy place, put any other choice out of the question. Whether the Mount Moriah on which the Temple was built was the mountain on which Abraham's sacrifice was offered is very doubtful,^a but it was, at any rate, the one place close by the city of David which was holy, and which afforded abundance of room for building. Separated by a broad shallow depression^b from the two hills upon which the upper and lower parts of the city of David were built, there was a third hill of almost equal height,^c sharply bounded on the further (or eastern) side by the ravine of Kedron. To the north it was connected with the somewhat higher slope, at that time unoccupied, on which a new quarter^d was afterwards built. To the south it fell away, narrowing as it fell, into the deep valley which carries the surface drainage of the neighbourhood down to the Dead Sea. Upon the knoll of this hill, in full view of the old city, and very near it, yet so far separated as to require a distinct descent and ascent in order to reach it, the foundations of Solomon's Temple were laid. The rough uneven surface was made plain. Where necessary substructures of huge stones raised the summit to the required level. The supply of water, so necessary and naturally so uncertain, was provided for by breaking through the hard crust of rock on which the buildings stood, and excavating cisterns in the softer rock beneath. At a subsequent

^a 2 Chron. iii. 1 is the only place where the Temple-hill is called Mount Moriah, and no allusion is made there to Abraham. If the chronicler had identified it with that mount of sacrifice, he would surely have mentioned it.

^b Afterwards called the Tyropæan valley, now filled with rubbish.

^c 2432 feet, as compared with the 2535 feet of the summit of Zion.

^d Bezetha.

period these rock-cisterns, and others of more artificial construction, were supplied by numerous aqueducts; at first they may probably have depended upon the rainfall carefully collected and husbanded. At the same time, the drainage of the Temple area was effected by means of tunnels in the rock which opened upon the steep sides of the ravine of Kedron.^a Upon the foundations thus carefully laid, the house itself was raised in the space of seven years. All the stones and the timbers were squared and shaped at a distance, and only needed to be fitted together on the spot.^b The oldest walls of the Temple buildings may be seen to-day to consist of massive stones fitted together without mortar, yet so accurately that a knife-blade cannot be inserted between them. We must not, however, suppose that the Temple really arose in silence like a thing that grew of itself. The huge stones could not have been swung into place without some rude machinery. Those multitudes of labourers could not have been directed without noise and shouting. Yet we may be sure that before the admiring eyes of Jerusalem the Temple arose as a thing of wonder and of mystery. The white walls grew slowly to their height; the vast beams filled in the spaces; walls and beams clothed themselves with shining gold; and all without a pause, without visible effort, without apparent difficulty. That multitudes laboured without reward, suffered without redress, and perished without pity, might be true enough; but it was not seen. Only the costly product of all this grew to its perfect beauty before their eyes from month to month.

25. THE DIMENSIONS AND DIVISIONS OF

^a The elaborate system of solidly-constructed drains recently discovered may be due to a later age; but that some system was in operation from the first is evident when we consider what rivers of blood, what accumulations of "filth and offscouring" must have resulted from the huge profusion of animals sacrificed by Solomon. Between Solomon and Herod, at any rate, it is hard to think of any one to whom such great works can be attributed.

^b 1 Kings

THE TEMPLE. If we compare Solomon's Temple with the public buildings of modern times it was small. We do unconscious injustice to it because we rank it along with the religious edifices of Christendom. But these are meant to accommodate the mass of worshippers, and therefore demand size. The Temple proper was never entered by any common foot. It was a shrine, not in our sense a church. It was a House for the Lord, that He might dwell there in the midst of Israel. No Israelite ever thought of entering this House, except the anointed ones and their attendants. The anointed priest and his subordinate ministers; the anointed king (in the case of Solomon himself at the dedication) and his guards; these alone were free to enter, because they were the chosen representatives who stood at once for the people before God, and for God before the people. Therefore the Temple was in itself a small building; it was a casket made as exquisite and as costly as possible to enclose the priceless jewel of the supernatural presence of the God of Israel. The plan of the Temple was taken from that of the Tabernacle by doubling the dimensions all round. The inner Sanctuary was 30 feet^a square, and the outer Sanctuary 30 feet broad by 60 feet long. The height of the whole was 45 feet, and the roof was probably flat,^b but the inner Sanctuary was ceiled at a height of 30 feet, so that it formed a perfect cube.^c These two rooms made up the House of God in the strictest sense. They were, however, surrounded by buildings which served either for ornament or for use. In front stood a porch, which with its belongings was doubtless in-

^a In all these measurements the cubit has been taken at 1·5 feet.

^b 1 Kings vi. 2. If the ridge-pole of the Tabernacle was $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet above the inner covering of the Holy Place, as seems probable, then the total height of the Tabernacle was $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and this dimension also was doubled by Solomon. The "upper chambers" of 2 Chron. iii. 9 may have been some wooden erection built upon the flat roof of the Temple.

^c So in the vision of St John, the new Jerusalem forms a perfect cube (Rev. xxi. 16).

tended to be the most striking feature of the whole edifice. It was 15 feet^a deep, and extended the whole breadth of the Temple, opening towards the east. It is uncertain what the height may have been,^b but as it was intended to add external dignity to the edifice, it probably rose above the Sanctuary roof into some kind of pinnacle or façade.^c Around the other sides of the Temple ran a stone wall rising nearly to the roof. Between the two walls were enclosed three tiers of small chambers; the lowest tier $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad from wall to wall, the middle tier 9 feet, and the highest $10\frac{1}{2}$. The difference in breadth was due to the fact that the walls of the Sanctuary diminished in thickness as they rose, leaving three ledges of $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet broad on which the ceiling beams of the chambers rested. These small rooms were intended partly for store-chambers, and partly for sleeping-places, and were the more solid and convenient counterparts of what had already existed in connection with the Tabernacle.^d Winding stair-cases^e led from one tier of chambers to another. Above

a The curtains which covered the Tabernacle were 15 feet longer than the Tabernacle (Ex. xxvi. 1, 2, compared with 16, 18). They therefore in all probability reached $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet beyond the building both in front and behind; doubling this we get the 15 feet depth of the porch.

b 2 Chron. iii. 4 gives the height of the porch as 180 feet, and Josephus extended this to the whole Temple. This, however, must be due to some mistake of figures. The Alexandrine text of the Greek version has 20 cubits (30 feet) instead of 120.

c In Herod's Temple the front which faced the great court rose into a "wing" or pinnacle. Compare Matt. iv. 5; Luke iv. 9.

d If the ridge-pole of the Tabernacle was $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the ground, as supposed, then the curtains being 42 feet long (Ex. xxvi. 2) would cover over a space of $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet on either side the Tabernacle. Doubling this, and allowing $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet for the thicknesses of the two walls, we have the $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the lower tier of chambers left. The narrative of the wanderings almost obliges us to suppose that the space thus covered over outside the Tabernacle was enclosed in some temporary way for the use of the priests and Levites. In the time of Samuel these enclosures were no doubt of a more substantial nature in keeping with the stationary character of the Sanctuary (1 Sam. iii. 3, 15). If the chambers, as seems to be intended, were carried round the west end of the Temple, we have every single dimension of the Tabernacle exactly doubled.

e One only is mentioned, with one external door (1 Kings vi. 8), but here must have been two at least.

the upper tier the walls of the Temple were pierced with window-openings, fitted with fixed lattices of boards. These excluded the rain and the glare of the sun, while they admitted fresh air and a subdued light, and afforded an escape for the fumes of incense and of the lamps. The inner Sanctuary was apparently without any light or ventilation.

26. THE ORNAMENTATION OF THE TEMPLE. Within the double Sanctuary neither stone nor wood was visible. It was indeed both ceiled and lined with cedar, and floored with fir,^a and the cedar was carved with simple shapes of fruits and flowers; but floor, and walls, and ceiling were alike overlaid with thin gold plates which were hammered in so as to reproduce on their surface the carvings beneath. Thus the whole House within had the appearance of having been carved out of a solid mass of gold. The inner and the outer Sanctuaries were separated by a wall of cedar, with doors of olive-wood, and here the carving was more elaborate, for it represented palm-trees and cherubim as well as flowers. This too was overlaid with gold, and the partition was further enriched with golden chains.^b The doors by which the Temple was entered beneath the porch were of fir, carved and gilded like the inner doors. The strangest and most startling of all the interior ornaments of the Temple were the two gigantic cherubim which Solomon placed in the Holy of Holies. Made of olive-wood, and overlaid with gold, they were each of them 15 feet high, and measured 15 feet across their outstretched wings, thus covering the whole breadth of the western wall, as they stood upon their feet facing towards the outer Sanctuary.^c What they were like can never be known for certain, but they were probably com-

^a Perhaps cypress is meant, but the word is doubtful.

^b The way in which these chains were disposed is uncertain.

^c 2 Chron. iii. 13, read, as in margin, "towards the house," *i.e.*, the outer room.

posite creature-forms, such as are described in Ezek. i. They might have seemed contrary to the letter of the second commandment; ^a but similar figures had been made for the Tabernacle by Divine command, and they were afterwards adopted into the imagery of heaven. ^b

27. THE SACRED FURNITURE (1 Kings vii. ; 1 Chron. xxviii. ; 2 Chron. iv.). The "holy instruments" of the Temple, like the Temple buildings, were copied from those of the Tabernacle, only on a scale of greater magnificence. Immediately in front of the oracle stood the altar of incense, made of cedar and plated with gold. Instead of the one lamp-stand and the one table of shewbread which stood in the Tabernacle, Solomon made ten lamp-stands of gold after the same pattern, and as many tables also of gold. The lamp-stands were disposed five on one side and five on the other side of the outer Sanctuary, and the tables were arranged amongst them. In after days, and perhaps from the first, only one table was used for the shewbread, and only one lamp-stand was lighted; ^c and this was no doubt more in keeping with the intention and the meaning of the ordinance given to Moses. ^d For the various purposes connected with the service of the Temple, either inside or outside, Solomon made an hundred basons of gold, and all the smaller instruments, pans, snuffers, tongs, &c., in corresponding numbers, and all of gold. Thus was there within the Temple, with all its profusion of ornament and of furniture, nothing for the eye to rest on but gold, excepting perhaps the

^a The shape of the cherubim must have been known at the time they were made, and may have suggested the "calves" of Jeroboam. Comp. Ezek. i. 7, 10; Rev. iv. 7.

^b Ezek. ii.; Rev. iv.; Ps. xcix. 1; Is. xxxvii. 16.

^c 2 Chron. xiii. 11; 2 Chron. xxix. 18. In 1 Kings vii. 48 only one table is mentioned.

^d The symbolism of the *one* candelabrum giving its sevenfold light, and of the *one* table bearing the twelve "loaves of faces" before God, is obvious.

coloured veil which hung in front of the inner Sanctuary.^a

28. **HIRAM, THE BRASSFOUNDER.** The golden furniture for use inside the Temple, however profuse in quantity, was moderate in size, and was made after ancient patterns. The brazen objects, which were to stand either for use or ornament outside the House, were to be more novel and more ambitious in size and make, and demanded a skill in metal-working which Solomon's servants did not possess. Accordingly he procured from the King of Tyre a certain Hiram, a Phœnician and Jewish half-breed, who possessed exactly the skill and resource which the business required. Hiram's foundry was at some distance from Jerusalem, near Succoth, in the plain of Jordan,^b where abundance of clay was to be found for the requisite beds and moulds. That he was able, with the scanty appliances and rude means of transport of those days, to cast very large and elaborate masses of metal-work, and to convey them some forty miles up country to Jerusalem, marks as well as anything else both his own mechanical genius and the amount of labour placed at his disposal by Solomon.

29. **THE WORKS OF HIRAM** (1 Kings vii. ; 2 Chron. iii. ; Jer. lii.). The most characteristic works sent out from the foundry of Hiram, and those which testified most clearly to their semi-heathen and semi-barbarous origin, were the two huge brazen pillars or obelisks which were erected in front of the House.^c The hollow shafts of these pillars were some 27 feet in height and 6 feet in diameter. On the top of each shaft was a kind of capital, $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet

^a The veil is not mentioned in Kings, nor anywhere but in 2 Chron. iii. 4. It hung perhaps inside the partition-wall, and if so it was invisible.

^b Succoth appears from Gen. xxxiii. 17, Judg. viii. 5, to have been on the further side of Jordan, not far from Jabbok. Zarthan was also on the Jordan (Josh. iii. 16).

^c That these pillars stood in front of the House, and were no structural part of the porch, is evident from the whole narrative.

in height, profusely ornamented with a sevenfold arrangement of metallic net-work and chain-work, intermingled with pomegranates and lilies. The pomegranate had long ago been adopted as the sacred fruit of Judaism,^a but the lily seems to have belonged to a different order of symbolism, and its introduction may have been due to the poetic taste of Solomon himself.^b To these pillars names were given, as though they were the steadfast guardians of the Sanctuary before which they stood. The one on the right was called "Jachin," an old family name in Israel,^c which had the sense of "founding" or "establishing." The other received the name of "Boaz," a name well-known as that of Solomon's great-great-grandfather, the husband of Ruth.^d These two pillars were the great triumphs of Hiram's skill, but there were many other wonderful works, more useful if less startling. Foremost amongst these was a circular "molten sea," 15 feet across, 7½ feet high, ornamented with conventional fruits and lilies,^e and supported on the backs of twelve oxen, which faced the four points of the compass, all of solid metal. This was [the obvious counterpart, in greater glory, of the laver which Moses had made,^f and was placed in the court before the House for the use of the priests. For less honourable purposes connected with the offering of sacrifices ten smaller lavers were made, 6 feet across at top. These were set in as many "bases," hollow chests, 6 feet square by 4½ feet high, very much enriched with ledges and festoons, and having figures of cherubim, lions, and palm-trees engraven on the panels between. The lavers fitted into circular openings in these "bases," and were

^a Ex. xxviii. 33; xxxix. 25.

^b The lily is only elsewhere mentioned in Solomon's Song eight times, and once in Hosea xiv. 5.

^c Numb. xxvi. 12; 1 Chron. xxiv. 17; Neh. xi. 10.

^d Ruth iv. 13.

^e 2 Chron. iv. 3 adds to the ornamentation figures of oxen.

^f Ex. xxxviii. 8.

further steadied by ornamental supports rising from the four corners. The "bases" were provided with wheels, and were therefore moveable according to convenience, but when in their usual place they stood five on either side of the court. The great height of these lavers from the ground makes it probable that the sacrificing priests and their attendants habitually stood upon raised platforms when at work, and that the lavers were wheeled up to them as they were wanted. Besides these larger masses of metal^a there were also of the same material pots and shovels and basons in great profusion for the service of the altar of sacrifice. This altar, strange to say, was not the ancient altar still preserved at Gibeon, but a new and very much larger one, measuring 30 feet by 30, and standing 15 feet from the ground. It was probably constructed in the ancient fashion of a metal frame enclosing a centre of earth and stones: it was either approached by a sloping ascent on one side,^b or else it rose in steps diminishing to a size of 18 feet square at top.^c

30. THE COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE.

All that now remained to make the House of the Lord complete was to enclose the sacred area around it. An inner court, no doubt surrounding the house, but enclosing a large space only in front towards the east, was walled in with three courses of hewn stone, and a row of cedar beams laid upon the top of these. This was afterwards called the court of the priests. Outside of this, and on a lower level,^d was an outer court with brass-lined gates. The size of these courts is not stated, but must have depended very much upon the slope of the ground. In Solomon's time, at any rate, the arrangements must have

^a The metal used appears to have been known as copper (Deut. viii. 9), but it was almost certainly alloyed in such a way as to give it the hardness of bronze. The mixing of metals would be well understood in the Phœnician foundries.

^b Ex. xx. 26.

^c So the altar is described by Ezekiel (xliii. 13-16).

^d Jer. xxxvi. 10.

allowed a vast concourse of people to see and hear what went on in the sacred area before the Temple. In the autumn of the eleventh year of his reign, seven and a half years after he commenced the great work of his life, Solomon was permitted to see it finished. While the work was still going on he had received an assurance that if he were faithful God would be faithful too, and would dwell for ever in the midst of His people.^a And now the House stood perfect in its beauty of stone and of gold, and there was nothing to hinder Solomon from claiming the Divine promise, as far as the edifice on Mount Moriah was concerned. As a fact, the promise was not claimed for thirteen years to come: for thirteen years the Temple stood silent and unused before it was dedicated.^b There may have been other reasons for this strange delay, of which we know nothing. The one reason of which we know is that Solomon was engaged in the meanwhile in completing other buildings which he deemed essential to the full magnificence of the ceremonial with which the Temple was to be inaugurated. Probably these palaces took much longer to build than he had anticipated, for we may be sure that the ideas and designs of the monarch grew more ambitious with each passing year. If we wonder that he should have deferred the dedication of the Temple at all for such a reason, we must

^a 1 Kings vi. 11-13.

^b 1 Kings vi. 38, as compared with vii. 1, 51; viii 1; ix. 1, seems decisive, although the interval is overlooked in Chronicles. The Greek Version inserts 1 Kings vi. 28, after the first verse of the chapter, and transposes vii. 1-12 to the end of the chapter, thus simplifying the narrative. In viii. 1 it inserts the words, "And it came to pass when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and his own house after twenty years." [The dates here are very difficult to determine. The dedication of the Temple has been very generally supposed to have followed the completion of the building at a brief interval, in the seventh month of the next year, *i.e.* the twelfth year. Some take it to have preceded the completion by a month. Not a few, looking specially to the statement in 1 Kings ix. 1-10, hold that it did not take place till after an interval of twenty years from the commencement of the building or thirteen after the completion, and when the palace also was just finished.—EDITOR.]

remember that it was to be, not only the Sanctuary of the nation, but also the chapel of the king and of his court. Solomon occupied, as the chosen seed of David and vicegerent of God, a position altogether new in Israel except so far as it had been partially anticipated by his father. The glory of the God of Israel and of His House was so bound up with the glory of the King of Israel, that they could not at that day be dissevered. It would not be fitting, it would not express the true ideal of things as then constituted, if Solomon had gone up in less than his own proper majesty to dedicate the Temple which was in so many senses his. The piety which makes nothing of personal considerations,^a which enables the greatest of men to ignore themselves in the presence of God, had no part in Solomon, nor would he have understood it. So he bestowed what was left of his father's accumulated treasures in the store-chambers of the new Temple,^b and went on with his own palaces until they were finished, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign.

31. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE. At last all was ready. The great day was come which should crown and consecrate with Divine acceptance all this labour and expense, and inaugurate a new era in the religious life of God's people. Solomon's Temple was indeed Solomon's; it was his creation and his possession; he remained himself its chief minister, as well as its patron and guardian. But because it was the king's, it was also his people's. It attracted to itself from the first the largest and most constant share of the religious regard and affection of Israel. The reverence which clung from ancient times to the old sanctuaries, or which was claimed for political purposes in behalf of newer

^a Because Moses had this piety in perfection (Numb. xii. 3; xiv. 12, 13), therefore he was as a man unspeakably nobler than Solomon. He too was "king in Jeshurun" (Deut. xxxiii. 5), yet he affected no state and founded no family.

^b 1 Kings vii. 51.

shrines, was, in the course of time, more or less violently uprooted, and transferred itself to the site of Solomon's choice. Evil days did indeed come fast upon it; its golden splendour faded, its pomp decayed. But the national religious sentiment once firmly rooted, once fairly taught to twine about that visible Sanctuary, never relaxed its hold, never ceased to grow in strength and in endurance; until at last the Saviour Himself gently and tenderly disentangled it from the ruins to which it clung. The Feast of Dedication was made to coincide with the most popular of all the annual festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles, in the middle of the month Ethanim, September. On the 10th day of this month, the solemn and mournful ceremonies of the Great Day of Atonement were to be observed.^a On the 15th the joyous assemblies of the Feast of Tabernacles began.^b In the interval between, the Temple was dedicated by the king, the priests, and all Israel—*i.e.*, by every one who had any representative character in the old patriarchal life of the nation or in the newer organisation introduced by David and Solomon. The first and most important of the ceremonies was the carrying of the Ark—the symbol of the Covenant—from the tent which David had provided for it into the splendid shrine which awaited it. The priests^c fetched out the Ark and carried it by its staves, other priests and Levites following with the remnants of the old fabric from Gibeon, and with such of the sacred vessels as had escaped the ravages of time. These were probably laid up reverently in some of the Temple chambers, perhaps in the space above the ceiling of the inner Sanctuary. The Ark itself was subjected to no such rude treatment as it had met with before.^d Even on its way from the city of

^a Lev. xxiii. 27.

^b Lev. xxiii. 34.

^c The high-priest at this time would seem to have been Azariah the son of Ahimaaz, son of Zadok (1 Chron. vi. 10), but the succession of high-priests is extremely uncertain.

^d 1 Sam. vi. 19; 2 Sam. vi. 3, 6.

David to the Temple-hill it was honoured with a profusion of sacrifices. Arrived at the Temple it was carried in within the veil, and placed beneath the sheltering wings of the cherubim. Apparently there was nothing in the Ark at that time except the two tables of stone.^a As the priests retired from the most Holy Place they drew out the staves of the Ark in such a way that the ends of them were visible from the outer Sanctuary.^b Thus although the Ark itself was never seen, the fact of its presence there could be ascertained at any time; and thus, at the very moment when all its wanderings seemed to be at an end for evermore, it was still declared that nothing, however sacred, can find permanent rest in this world. The Ark in its place, the priests withdrew—perhaps in order to prepare an incense-offering for the golden altar. At the same moment, the Levitical choirs, clad in white linen garments,^c broke out into singing, chanting the well-known refrain:^d “For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever,” to the sound of harps, of trumpets, and of other musical instruments. No doubt the strain of expectation upon king and people was intense. Was all this ceremony, this lavish expenditure, this outward devotion, founded upon anything real? Would the visible Presence of the Lord, so long absent, really return to Israel? The answer was not long in coming. The priests, returning to the house, were forced back by the same thick cloud which had driven Moses from the Tabernacle on the day of its dedication.^e There could be no doubt now. Solomon called to mind the thick

^a The pot of manna and Aaron’s rod (Heb. ix. 4) had doubtless disappeared. It is noteworthy that no mention is made of any “book of the Law” (Deut. xxxi. 26). Possibly it was stowed away in one of the chambers among other relics of the Tabernacle (2 Chron. xxxiii. 14).

^b It is impossible to say how this was managed since a solid partition screened off the inner Sanctuary. Possibly openings were made through which the ends of the staves could be seen.

^c Rev. xix. 8.

^d Ps. cxxxvi. and others. 1 Chron. xvi. 41.

^e Ex. xl. 35.

darkness in which the Lord had descended upon Sinai,^a the cloud in which He had promised to speak with Aaron ;^b he uttered aloud the joy of his heart that it had been given to him to build an enduring home for the God of Israel : then he turned and blessed the people, reciting briefly the hopes and purposes which had been fulfilled that day.

32. SOLOMON'S PRAYER (1 Kings viii. ; 2 Chron. vi., vii.). Solomon had not so far taken the lead in the ceremonial of the day. He had been waiting for an unmistakeable sign of acceptance, such as had now been given. From this moment he himself conducted the worship of the chosen people in his character as anointed head of that people. In that character he was supreme alike over prince and priest : he assumed without hesitation and without contradiction the position of the Moses and the Aaron of the new Israel. In front of the altar of burnt-offering a brazen platform had been erected. Upon this, in full view of the assembled multitudes, audible to many thousands of them, visible even to the women and children upon the crowded housetops of the older city, the king of Israel knelt, lifted his hands to heaven, and poured forth his heart in prayer. The prayer was worthy of the king, and of the occasion. It showed in the very best way that largeness of heart, that unselfish concern for all his people, great and small, near and far, which distinguished Solomon at his best. It showed how religious worship had changed in some ways since the time of Moses. In the books of Moses almost no one prays : Moses talks with God, as Mediator,^c as Abraham had done before him.^d The Tabernacle had been a place of sacrifice and holy rites, not of prayer.^e But Solomon not only interceded himself for his people, but the very substance of his prayer

^a Ex. xix. 9-16.

^b Lev. xvi. 2.

^c Num. xiv. 13.

^d Gen. xviii. 23.

^e Hannah is the only private person who is mentioned as resorting to the Tabernacle for prayer (1 Sam. i. 10, 12)

was that that house might become a house of prayer for them; that the Lord would be a sympathetic observer of every suppliant that came before Him there, whether in person or in spirit; that prayer, sincere and humble, might never be made in vain, without any reference to sacrifices and ordered rites. Solomon cannot be accused of neglecting the outward and visible in religion, yet in this prayer he rose clear above the formalism which was possible enough under the Mosaic dispensation. Solomon cannot be accused of any want of patriotism, yet in his prayer he was moved to recognise the fact that his own people might be defeated and exiled, and that other people, not his, might learn to seek the Lord. The one thing outward and visible which was to serve as the necessary link between earth and heaven, between the prayer of the suppliant and the sinner and the answer of God, was that House which he had built. This most solemn supplication ended, Solomon arose from his knees, and turning towards the congregation, he blessed them again, invoking on their behalf the faithfulness and goodness of God, and charging them on their part to be ever faithful to Him. As soon as the king had finished speaking, or, it may be, before he rose from his knees, another sign from heaven was vouchsafed—a sign which was visible to the multitudes far and wide. The fire from heaven fell upon the sacrifices^a which lay upon the great brazen altar. At the same time the dark cloud which filled the house was lighted up by the glory of the Lord. Through the open doors below, and through the lattices above, the glory flashed upon the eyes of the people, and told them that the Lord Jehovah had indeed come to dwell among them. They fell upon their faces and worshipped, taking up the refrain sung by the choirs, “For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.”

^a Lev. ix. 24: 1 Kings xviii. 38.

33. SOLOMON'S SACRIFICE AND FEAST. It now remained to commence the ordinary worship of the completed and dedicated Temple with sacrifices of thanksgiving. These were offered by Solomon, with the assistance of all the priests, to the enormous number of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep, provided by the royal munificence. In order to find room for such a multitude of victims, the centre of the court was sanctified, and temporary altars erected to receive the blood of sprinkling and to consume what had to be burnt. The flesh of these sacrifices was distributed among the attendants of the king, and then amongst the mass of the people. Thus they were enabled to keep not only the Feast of Dedication for seven days,^a but the Feast of Tabernacles which followed, with that profusion of animal food which an eastern people enjoy so thoroughly because so rarely. All Israel was represented at this feast, and no doubt a large majority of the adult male population was actually present, from the northern pass beyond Mount Hermon^b to the southern wady which formed the frontier towards Egypt. For once all tribal and sectional jealousies were forgotten: a common joy, a common enthusiasm for their one God and for His one anointed, silenced at least for the time the quarrels of the past and the discontents of the present. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the king dismissed them, and they departed to their own homes full of wonder and of satisfaction. It was, we may suppose, in the quiet which succeeded to all this excitement that Solomon received from

^a The precise duration of the double feast is given in 1 Kings viii. 65 and in 2 Chron. vii. 9, 10. It raises, however, a considerable difficulty, if it implies that the Great Day of Atonement on the 10th day of Ethanim was not observed.

^b "The entering in of Hamath" was the gorge of the Litâny through which the high road to Hamath passed.

^c According to Lev. xxiii. 4; Numb. xxix. 12, the first day of the Feast was kept on the 15th day of Ethanim, and therefore the eighth day fell on the 22nd. But this eighth day (1 Kings viii. 66) was the 23rd according to 2 Chron. vii. 10. Either the text is uncertain, or else the letter of the commandment was not observed.

God another and more private answer to his prayer of dedication. It was in a dream, as at Gibeon, that this answer reached the mind of the king ; and the tone of it must have harmonised perfectly with that reaction of spirit which always follows a time of religious exaltation. It was indeed in strange contrast to the unclouded splendour, the unreserved acceptance, which had crowned the public festival. God had heard his prayer for the House, and had granted it. God would indeed hear the prayers made in that holy House by any sad or sinful children of His. And God would keep His promises to Solomon, if Solomon would keep the commandments of God. But if—and this formed the bulk of the message—if he or his house turned away from God, their fall would be as great as their rise, and that House itself should serve to point the melancholy moral of human sin and of Divine vengeance. With these foreboding tones the triumph and applause of that high festival sank to rest.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF INQUIRY.

1. *What was the greatest work of Solomon's reign?*
2. *What did he find ready to his hand?*
3. *What was his object in raising a levy?*
4. *How did the levy bear upon (1) the Canaanites, (2) the Israelites?*
5. *What part was taken by Hiram and the Phœnicians?*
6. *What was the nature of the work in the mountains?*
7. *What was the date of the beginning of the Temple?*
8. *Where was it built? and what event fixed the site?*
9. *What had to be done before the walls were raised?*
10. *What was unusual about the method of building?*
11. *How did the dimensions of the Temple differ from those of the Tabernacle?*

12. *What suggested the side-chambers of the Temple? and how had they been anticipated in the Tabernacle at Shiloh?*

13. *How was the inner Sanctuary separated from the outer?*

14. *What was used to cover the Temple inside? What appearance did it present to the eye?*

15. *How did the Temple furniture differ from that of the Tabernacle in respect (1) of the cherubim, (2) of the candlesticks, (3) of the tables? What remained the same?*

16. *Who was Solomon's brass-founder? Where did he work?*

17. *What were the largest of his works?*

18. *What else did he make for the Temple service?*

19. *How long was the Temple in building? and how long did it stand waiting for dedication?*

20. *What was the first thing to be done when it was dedicated?*

21. *What sign did God vouchsafe?*

22. *What position did Solomon then take up?*

23. *What was the one great thing he prayed for?*

24. *What sign did God vouchsafe again?*

25. *How did the ceremony continue? With what did it end?*

26. *What feast was kept, and how long?*

27. *What did God tell Solomon afterwards in answer to his prayer?*

CHAPTER V.

SOLOMON'S OTHER BUILDINGS.

34. **THE GREAT BUILDER OF HIS AGE.**
Solomon was the great builder of his nation. Those who came before him did not build at all, and those who came after him did little but repair or finish.

The era of building is almost always a marked one in the life of a state. In a country like ours, indeed, in which buildings are constantly being erected, this is the case only in particular departments. But in a country like Palestine where private habitations are all mean, and public buildings comparatively few, they are for ever associated with the men who raised them up, with the days of peace and wealth which made their building possible. Solomon's buildings were small compared with the huge erections of modern days, or even of ancient Egypt and Assyria. But to the eyes of pastoral Israel which had ever dwelt in cottages, and had never had so much as a town of its own until David took Jerusalem, they seemed marvels of magnificence. If Solomon had done nothing else, and had left nothing behind him but his buildings, they would have stamped him as a man of singular genius, resource, and perseverance.

35. SOLOMON'S PALACES (1 Kings vii. 1-12). In the interval of thirteen years between the completion of the Temple and its dedication, Solomon was employed in building palaces in the city of David. From the time consumed in their erection, and from the admiration they excited, we may certainly conclude that they were very grand. Nothing in the least resembling them had been seen before in Israel, where the houses had all been of the humble character which still prevails in Palestine. The few details, however, which have come down to us do not give us much idea of their actual appearance. The king's palace included an edifice called the House of the Forest of Lebanon, because the roof was supported by a multitude of cedar pillars, recalling to mind one of the small but stately cedar groves of Lebanon.^a Cedar beams rested upon these pillars, and supported some kind of chambers. The whole

^a Perhaps the nearest approach in general idea to this house of pillars is to be seen in the great mosque at Kairovan, and in other works of Arab art. These latter are indeed far larger and richer, but the forest-like appearance is common to both.

150 feet by 75, and 45 feet high. It was used partly as an armoury,^a where the 500 golden shields^b used on grand occasions by the body-guard were kept. We may think of them as hung upon the pillars, and filling the hall with flashings of light as the sunbeams fell upon them through the triple line of windows above. No doubt the hall was also used for many purposes of ceremony, and for feasts, for which purpose a great number of vessels of pure gold were kept there.^c Attached to this part of the palace-buildings, and perhaps forming the public approach to it, was a smaller pillar-hall, 75 feet by 45. In front of this again was a portico adorned with pillars, and other architectural features. These halls and courts formed the more public department of the palace. Behind them, opening upon a more private court, were the apartments of the king himself, and the separate palace of the queen. All these buildings were in the same massive and costly style; the walls and pavings of great stones accurately sawn, some of them measuring 15 feet; the pillars and floors and ceilings all of cedar. Even Pharaoh's daughter must have been satisfied with the grandeur of her surroundings.

36. SOLOMON'S THRONE-ROOM AND THRONE (1 Kings vii. 7; x. 18-20; 2 Chron. ix. 17-19). Between the more public and the more private portions of the palace, Solomon had a Hall of Judgment built, to which his subjects might come for justice and for counsel. Like the rest it was enclosed in cedar. In it stood the throne upon which Solomon sat in state as king and judge. It was overlaid with fine gold, and inlaid with ivory, so as to be the cost-

^a 1 Kings x. 17; 2 Chron. ix. 16.

^b Taking the 3 pounds of 1 Kings x. 17, as containing 100 ounces, the value of the gold in each smaller shield was nearly £400, and therefore (according to 2 Chron. ix. 15, 16) the value on each larger shield was nearly £800. If so, the total value would be a quarter of a million sterling. But the value of the shekel is very uncertain.

1 Kings xi. 21.

liest of all the works of art which filled the palace. Six steps led up to the seat, and on either side of each step stood a lion.^a Two other lions stood beside the arms which enclosed the seat. The back of the throne rose into some sort of canopy-work, and a golden footstool^b formed a distinct feature of this magnificent structure which was one of the great sights of Jerusalem.

37. SOLOMON'S PUBLIC WORKS. Some miles to the south of Bethlehem, and a little to the eastward of the high road to Hebron, on the border land between the cultivated fields and the desert wherein David wandered, is a little valley around the head of which are several springs of water. These springs have been carefully trapped and conducted by underground channels into three great reservoirs, which occupy the upper part of the valley. They were made partly by excavating the rock, partly by building embankments, and when in perfect order must have held a vast supply of water. They are called Solomon's Pools, and in all probability were really his. The water supply of a rapidly growing city like Jerusalem could not be left by a really great ruler to the precarious and scanty sources provided by nature. We may well believe the tradition that Solomon not only made these pools, but brought the water by means of aqueducts into Jerusalem, thus bestowing upon its inhabitants what was of more value even than gold and silver. Ruins indeed of aqueducts are to be seen all over the Holy Land, and many of these works were made, no doubt, under the directions of Solomon. A system of irrigation is in most parts of that land the one thing which will turn a dreary wilderness into a flowering garden.

38. SOLOMON'S PRIVATE RESORTS (Ecclesiastes ii. 4-6). The aqueducts, reservoirs, and other

^a The lions had perhaps some reference to the lion of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 9; Numb. ii. 3).

^b The footstool had an important symbolic meaning (Ps. cx. 1 Lam. ii. 1).

public works of Solomon were of the highest utility ; but he also spent vast sums and a great amount of labour on objects which were purely selfish. Near the Pools of Solomon are pointed out the ruins of Etam, where he is said to have made his gardens, watered from these pools, and enriched with everything which could render them delightful to the senses. Hither we may think of the luxurious monarch as being driven in his golden palanquin^a along a smooth causeway, arrayed in "all his glory,"^b escorted by a crowd of gaily dressed attendants, and accompanied by the favourites of the day, male and female.^c Besides the gardens at Etam, he had no doubt other country retreats or paradises, and one in particular amongst the northern mountains,^d where the beauties of nature were improved, or at least made more enjoyable by extensive and costly works.

39. THE FORTIFICATION OF JERUSALEM (1 Kings ix. 15-24 ; xi. 27). David had done something towards fortifying the old stronghold which he had made his capital. The desperate resistance which Jerusalem has so often made to the attacks of the most powerful armies in the world shows how very strong the position is by nature, if that position is made the most of by skill and valour. David had enlarged the old fortifications of Zion by erecting some kind of defences upon the slightly lower eminence of Millo or Acra^e (as it was afterwards called), which fronted Mount Zion to the north across the head of the shallow Tyropæan valley. Solomon completed the line of ramparts round the growing city,^f enclosing the new quarter of Acra, and perhaps enclosing also the Temple-hill to the west. Those

^a Sol. Song iii. 9, "chariot;" the description suits a litter or palanquin, and so the Greek Version puts it.

^b Matt. vi. 29.

^c Eccles. ii. 8.

^d Sol. Song iv. 8, 16, etc.; 1 Kings ix. 19.

^e 2 Sam. v. 9. The word "Millo" is uniformly rendered "Acra" by the Greek Version and Josephus.

^f 1 Kings xi. 27. Instead of "repaired the breaches" the Greek Version has "completed the fortification."

vast fragments of masonry, huge and close, which are now being brought to light from beneath the rubbish of centuries may well be ascribed to the great builder who alone among the kings of Judah had the genius to devise and the means to complete them. For Solomon employed in these works the same forced labour which enabled him to erect the Temple on Mount Moriah and the palace on Mount Zion. Upon the remnant of the Canaanites especially^a the heavy tribute of service was laid, and they were made to wear out their lives in raising the fortifications, which destroyed their last chance of rebellion.^b Henceforward they not only ceased to be dangerous; they ceased, apparently, to exist.

40. FORTIFIED CITIES AND MILITARY POSTS (1 Kings ix. 15-19; 2 Chron. viii. 2-6). The works at Jerusalem, which made it practically impregnable when properly defended, were followed up by a series of other fortifications all over the enlarged realm of Israel. The strong posts of Lower Bethhoron and Upper Bethhoron, some twelve miles north-west of the Holy City, in the north-west corner of Benjamin, were made more strong. The old Philistine city of Gezer, which had been allotted to Ephraim,^c but never occupied,^d had been taken and burnt by the King of Egypt,^e and afterwards given by him to Solomon as part of his daughter's dowry. It was high time that a place so far within the borders of Israel should be secured, and this was done: the place was rebuilt and fortified, and doubtless colonised by a Jewish settlement. Baalath, in the old territory of Dan,^f not far from Gezer, was also made a stronghold. Next in order of dis-

^a But not exclusively; see 1 Kings xi. 28.

^b 2 Chron. viii. 8. After 1 Kings x. 22 the Greek Version inserts the substance of 1 Kings ix. 15-23, and adds as the reason of these fortifications being built, "in order that none of the people should get the upper hand of him that were left of the Hittite and the Amorite, etc, who were not of the children of Israel."

^c Josh. xvi 3.

^d Josh xvi. 10; Judg. i. 29.

^e 1 Kings ix. 16.

^f Josh. xix 44.

tance came Megiddo, a place of note on the edge of the great plain which separates the highlands of Judea from those of Galilee, and therefore in the heart of what was afterwards the northern kingdom. Much further to the north, above the waters of Merom, Hazar, famous in the wars of Joshua,^a was fortified. To the south-west of this last post, upon the slopes which descended to the Phœnician coast-line, Solomon planted a Jewish settlement and a Jewish garrison in a number of villages lying closely together. These villages had had a singular history. At the time when the Temple and the Palace at Jerusalem were finished, when the bargain made between Solomon and Hiram was completed, it seemed good to each of the kings, in token of their mutual satisfaction, to make some valuable present to the other. Solomon may have thought that Hiram wanted nothing so much as corn-lands and vineyards; or he may have exhausted even his enormous revenues in vast undertakings; anyhow, it came to pass that, instead of sending Hiram a present of money, he made over to him the district of Cabul, on the borders of Asher and Zebulun,^b containing twenty villages. These villages had no doubt been held up to this time by some remnants of the Canaanites. Hiram came out to see them, but, accustomed as he was to the grandeur of his own merchant cities, he was disgusted with these squalid villages, and declined them, making some contemptuous jest in his own language upon the name of the most important among them.^c Hiram, however, could not afford to quarrel with the monarch of Israel, so he sent him an immense sum of money as a final present.^d Solo-

^a Josh. xi. 1. There was, however, another place of the same name in the extreme south (Josh. xv. 23).

^b Josh. xix. 27. It still exists as Kabul, nine miles east of Akka, the ancient Aecho.

^c It is impossible to understand the point of the jest now. The language of Tyre was akin to that of the Jews, but Hiram's play upon words would not be intelligible in Hebrew.

^d 1 Kings ix. 14. Somewhere about half a million of our money.

mon was more wise than Hiram, for he did not despise these villages, but seized the opportunity of strengthening his frontier on one of its weakest points. Lastly, far beyond the limits of his proper kingdom, Solomon seized upon a site equally valuable as a military post and as a commercial depot. Some two hundred and fifty miles north-east of Jerusalem, half way between Damascus and the Euphrates, lies an oasis in the desert, now wholly ruined and desolate, once filled with a large and flourishing population. Its ruins still go by the name of Tadmor, which it bore in Solomon's time, although it is better known in history as Palmyra. The garrison which Solomon placed here enabled him to overawe the desert tribes, to keep a watch upon further Syria, and to secure his communications with the outlying post of Tiphseh or Thapsacus on the Euphrates.

41. STORE-CITIES AND BARRACKS. Tadmor was not only a stronghold, but also one of the royal store-cities in which Solomon erected buildings for the storage of the necessaries of war, of provisions, and of exchangeable goods, for the supply of the king's troops and of the king's merchants. Other store-cities he had in the land of Hamath, *i.e.*, in the upper valley of the Leontes,^a which no doubt served the same double purpose as Tadmor itself. In these and many other places, wherever the needs of the new commerce demanded it, the royal buildings erected by Solomon formed so many centres, round which population and trade gathered. Besides the fortifications and the stores, the king built extensive barracks all over his kingdom, for the cavalry and the fighting chariots which he maintained.^b Both these forces

^a This upper valley formed a part of the territory of Hamath. Hamath itself was never occupied by the Israelites.

^b 1 Kings iv. 26; ix. 19; x. 26; 2 Chron. ix. 25. The statement that Solomon had 40,000 chariot horses is omitted by the Greek Version, and is supposed to be due to a copyist's error. Instead of 1400 chariots in 1 Kings x. 26, the Greek Version has 4000 mares. The Egyptians used mares for chariots (Sol. Song i. 9).

were new in Israel, and were contrary to all the national ideas of warfare.^a Nor do they seem ever to have been of any use. But it was a part of Solomon's magnificence to surround himself with all the warlike apparatus which was known in Egypt and in other neighbouring lands. Like the royal guards, the horsemen and charioteers were no doubt in the king's pay, and formed a force altogether different from the old militia of the tribes. They were, however, Israelites,^b and not foreigners. Some were quartered in Jerusalem, and the rest dispersed in the various cities where the necessary accommodation had been provided for them.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF INQUIRY.

1. *What monuments of his genius did Solomon leave behind him?*

2. *What was (1) the general appearance, and (2) the known use of the "house of the forest of Lebanon"?*

3. *What position did the Judgment Hall hold in the palace buildings?*

4. *What great work of art adorned it?*

5. *What works did Solomon construct to the south of Bethlehem?*

6. *What did he make at Etham and at other places?*

7. *What did he do in the way of fortifying Jerusalem?*

8. *What is the later name of Millo, and where did it lie?*

9. *What other places were fortified? Give the respective positions of Bethhoron, Hazor, Tadmor.*

10. *What circumstances led to the fortifying of Gezer?*

11. *What incident occurred in connection with the district of Cabul?*

12. *What was the use of the barracks which Solomon built in Jerusalem and elsewhere?*

^a Deut. xvii. 16; xx. 1; Josh. xi. 6; 2 Sam. viii. 4; Ps. xx. 7,
2 Chron. viii. 9.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISRAEL.

42. SOLOMON'S COMMERCE. Palestine, under such a government as Solomon's, was admirably situated for the purposes of commerce. It shared with Egypt the advantage of standing between the east and the west, so that it could trade with both, and exchange the commodities of the one for those of the other. Egypt does not seem to have been a commercial country at this time; and the Phœnicians, although the leading nation at sea, were closely hemmed in on land by the subjects and vassals of Solomon. Stretching from the Great Sea on the west to the Euphrates and the Red Sea on the east, from the frontier of Egypt on the south to the regions of Hamath and Antioch^a on the north, the kingdom of Solomon became for the time the centre of trade and of wealth. Caravan routes, well kept and well guarded, crossed it in every direction. The products of Spain met with those of utmost Arabia or even of more distant India, possibly of southern Africa. The chariots and horses of Egypt were in great demand, not only for the king and his court, but for the Hittite and Syrian chieftains in the north, who copied the fashion set them at Jerusalem. Each horse, we are told, cost about £25,^b and each chariot with its team about £100. This trade, like most of the trade of those days, was in the hands of the king himself. So also was the trade in linen yarn, of which his agents had the monopoly.^c No doubt the natural products of the

^a Not, of course, then known as Antioch.

^b 1 Kings x. 29. Taking the shekel as worth 3s. 4d.

^c The rendering "linen yarn" is, however, very doubtful. The Greek Version had originally "from Thekūe" or "from Kūe," and there is reason to believe that there was a place called Coa on the frontier of Egypt. If this is right, we should read "from Coa" instead of "linen yarn"

Holy Land, the corn, the wine, the olive-oil, the honey, the dried fruits, which it is capable of producing in such abundance, were exported freely in exchange for the precious metals, the valuable timber, and other prized commodities of east and west.^a

43. SOLOMON'S FLEETS (1 Kings ix. 26-28; x. 11, 12; 2 Chron. viii. 17, 18; ix. 21). The Hebrew peasant did not love the sea. Neither in his old home beyond the river, nor in the southern land of his sojourn had he known it; neither in his own land did he make much acquaintance with it. The Phœnicians to the north, and the Philistines to the south, cut him off from his own coasts; and even when the Philistines were subdued the lack of harbours, as well habit and prejudice, forbad him to venture forth. It was very characteristic of Solomon that he broke away from all the traditions of his country and his race, and embarked in distant maritime enterprises in which large profits were balanced by great dangers. He could not have done this, however, if he had been obliged to look for native ship-builders or native sailors. No Israelite who held to the religious ideas of his fathers would have sailed for hire upon a distant sea;^b and no Bezaleel would have arisen to fashion a thing so alien to the life of Israel as a ship. Solomon's navy, therefore, was rather a private speculation of his own than a national or public concern. By means of his friendly alliance with the Phœnicians he was able to buy or to build ships, and to man them partly with Phœnician seamen and partly with his own "servants," *i.e.*, with officers and soldiers in his own pay. These vessels he sent to share in the most distant and most lucrative enterprises of that day. Solomon's principal trading station was at

^a 1 Kings x. 27.

^b The sailors of the ship in which Jonah sailed from Joppa were all foreigners. Jonah i. 9.

Ezion-geber,^a near to Elath, at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea. Through the rugged wilderness which lay between this place and the south of Judah he made a road over which Hiram's men transported the necessary materials for building a fleet^b which they afterwards helped to navigate. This fleet went to Ophir, and brought back an enormous weight of gold and a great quantity of costly wood,^c which the king had made into balustrades for the Temple and the palace, and into musical instruments for the choirs.^d The situation of Ophir is disputed, but we may probably look for it in the south of Arabia,^e a land which was famous for the quantity of gold it produced. Solomon must have freighted this fleet himself for its outward voyage, and he was so much interested in its fortunes that he went himself to Ezion-geber in order to visit it.^f This, however, was not the only fleet which Solomon had at sea. The Mediterranean, whose blue waters he saw from all his western hills, invited him to seek the wealth which its distant shores yielded richly. The Phœnicians carried on an active commerce with Tarshish or Tartessus, an old colony of theirs in Spain. To this place the products not only of the Mediterranean coasts, but also of the Atlantic coasts of Europe and Africa, were brought in order to be bartered or sold in its fairs. Solomon sent his ships along with those of Hiram to Tarshish. They coasted slowly thither, staid there trafficking a long time, and coasted slowly back, returning with enormous profits, and with a great store of valuable and curious

^a The name Ezion-geber means "giant's backbone." It was probably due either to some reef in the sea, or to some peculiar ridge on shore.

^b 2 Chron. viii. 18. There is no timber fit for use near Elath.

^c The almug trees were probably sandal wood brought from further India by the Arabian traders.

^d 1 Kings x. 12. For "pillars" we should read "banisters" or "balustrades." For "harps and psalteries" we might better say "guitars and harps."

^e Gen. x. 29; Job xxii. 24.

^f 2 Chron. viii. 17.

things^a once in three years. Solomon's maritime enterprises probably lasted as long as his own power remained unbroken. It is evident that from Ezion-geber his fleets could only sail as long as there was peace in Edom; and whether from Ezion-geber or from Joppa they could only sail as long as the King of Tyre gave his active assistance.

44. SOLOMON'S REVENUES. The wealth which flowed in to King Solomon year by year was certainly very great indeed, though it is impossible to know how great. It came to a great extent in kind rather than in money or in precious metal. From his own people no tax was demanded except the stated contributions of food and provender which the officers of the twelve districts collected, and forwarded each in his own month. The daily provision for the court was nearly 90 quarters of meal, 30 oxen, 100 sheep, and a quantity of game, both four-footed and winged.^b Something like 10,000 people may have been fed by the king in one capacity or another, courtiers, guests, retainers, employés, slaves. The provender of barley and straw required for the cavalry and chariot horses, and for the king's own stud, and for the thorough-bred horses^c which carried the royal despatches was collected in the same manner. The revenues, however, properly so called, of Solomon were drawn chiefly from strangers. They consisted largely of "gifts" from tributary princes, and from foreigners who found it their interest to cultivate the friendship of so powerful a neighbour.^d Added to this were the profits derived from the

^a The ivory and the apes would naturally find their way to Tartessus from Africa. Apes are still found in the rock of Gibraltar. How peacocks should get there is not so evident, unless they were bred by the Phœnician colonists. The rendering "peacocks" is however doubtful, and the Greek Version omits it.

^b Estimated at Australian prices for the sake of fairer comparison, the value of a month's provision would be about £11,000.

^c 1 Kings iv. 28. The word rendered dromedary means a "swift beast" (Mich. i. 13), *i.e.*, a horse bred and trained for speed.

^d 1 Kings iv. 21; x. 25; 2 Chron. ix. 24, 26; Psalm lxxii. ii. 8-11, 15

voyages of the fleets, and from the trade carried on by the king's merchants,^a and from the management of the various farms and domains which the king had inherited from his father.^b Most of the new commerce which had sprung into such sudden and vigorous life was in the hands of men who were enrolled among the royal servants, and who paid heavy royalties in kind upon all they bought and sold. The pastoral tribes of Northern Arabia acknowledged Solomon's rule by annual tribute, paid no doubt in kind,^c and presents of all descriptions poured in from those who wished to secure his favour, or to avert his anger. But the amount of gold and silver actually received by Solomon was enormous. From what particular sources this plenty of the precious metals was derived we do not know, but we may well suppose that the era of Solomon was marked by one of those sudden increases in the annual find of gold which have left such unmistakable marks upon the history of civilisation. What South America did for the seventeenth century, California and Australia for the nineteenth, some unknown region of Southern Asia, or of Eastern Africa, or of the Iberian Peninsula, or of all these, did for the "golden age" of Israel under the son of David. It so happened that gold and silver were very plentiful, and therefore very cheap, in the lands within the reach of Solomon's arms, or of Solomon's commerce; and it so happened that the movement of the age caused the rising stream of wealth to set fast and strong upon the coasts of Israel. In one voyage the fleet from Ophir is said to have brought back more than £2,000,000 in gold.^d On two occasions^e Solomon received presents of more than half-a-million each from the rulers of other kingdoms. It is not surprising therefore that his annual revenue in gold alone is stated at the round sum of 666

^a 1 Kings. x. 15; 2 Chron., ix. 14.

^b 1 Chron. xxvii. 25-31.

^c Compare 2 Chron. xvii. 11.

^d 1 Kings ix. 28.

^e 1 Kings ix. 14; 2 Chron. ix. 9.

talents, more than £3,000,000 of our money.^a Such wealth was indeed within the experience of Israel something wholly astonishing and unexampled.

45. SOLOMON'S WISDOM. At Gibeon God had promised to His anointed intelligence and very much wisdom and a great breadth of sympathy for diverse subjects and characters.^b And this promise was as amply fulfilled as the other promise of riches and greatness, so that the golden age under Solomon was not an epoch of material prosperity only, but was quite as much a time of intellectual activity. The King of Israel became as widely renowned, and as greatly admired, for the cleverness of his sayings, and for his sharp insight into the nature of men and things, as for the magnificence of his surroundings, or the vigour of his rule. To the men of those days and of those realms, intellectual greatness seemed more truly great, more distinctly and directly of God, than any other kind of greatness. The fame of Solomon's wisdom spread abroad, and took a deeper root in the imagination of men than even the story of his wealth, or the terror of his great power. What this fame was is seen in the books which are connected with his name, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Men knew that a wisdom (as it seemed) more than human was to be found at Jerusalem in the person of the king: a wisdom higher than that of the Magi, or of the priests of Egypt, or of any of those schools of learning in which ambition and imposture were mingled with traditional knowledge and some acquaintance with science. Three thousand "proverbs" were ascribed to Solomon, and one thousand and five "songs."^c The proverb of those days was not simply

^a A larger sum is annually raised by very light taxation from a pastoral mining, and agricultural community of less than a million souls in New South Wales.

^b This is the meaning of the Hebrew "largeness of heart" (1 Kings iv. 29). The "heart" was for the Jews rather the seat of understanding than affection.

^c 1 Kings iv. 32. An excellent instance of the "mashal" (proverb or parable) is found in Ezek. xvii. 2-10.

what we mean by the name, but rather a poetical and allegorical utterance full of point, complete in itself, and for the most part founded on similitudes drawn from nature. The wide experience and shrewd insight of the king, his keen observation of outward nature, and his many-sided sympathies with very diverse types of character, furnished him with the substance of these "mashals." His literary education and an extensive acquaintance with the poetry of surrounding nations, added to abundance of leisure and an original genius, enabled him to clothe the substance in the elaborate forms which gave them popularity, and caused them to be remembered. The "songs" were doubtless intended for singing in musical cadence and with musical accompaniment. They were probably both sacred and secular. The outburst of song which David had so largely directed to the service and glory of God was thoroughly national; the songs of Israel were the flowers which sprang of themselves amidst the cultivated harvests of peace and plenty. Some of Solomon's songs were no doubt chanted by the Temple choirs: but others were sung by the hearth and the watch-fire and the well, mere bubbles on the stream of poetry, which vanished with the age that gave them birth.^a Solomon also spoke of trees and beasts and birds and fishes and reptiles, and these sayings also went abroad. What he spoke about these things was not at all in the way of natural history, for that was quite apart from the knowledge of his day. It was no doubt in the way of "parables from nature,"—shrewd sayings, full of practical wisdom or sarcasm, which men could verify for themselves by ordinary observation of natural facts. The lizard,^b the ant,^c the hyrax,^d could all be made to teach a lesson; as well as the lion^e and the bear.^f The

^a In Amos vi. 3-6 we have a picture of idle and selfish men amusing themselves with songs such as those of Solomon.

^b Prov. xxx. 28; a kind of house-lizard is probably the animal intended.

^c Prov. xxx. 25.

^d Prov. xxx. 26.

^e Prov. xxvi. 13; Eccles. ix. 4.

^f Prov. xvii. 12; xxviii. 15.

bramble^a and the thistle^b had their antitypes among mankind as well as the cedar^c and the oak.^d Solomon, therefore, was the leader of his people in the new intellectual life, full of eagerness and wonder, which had sprung up under the genial influences of prosperity and comfort. They delighted to think that their prince was more than a match for all his contemporaries, whether in the friendly contest of wit,^e or in the higher effort to solve some of the troublesome problems of life.^f How great an impression this wisdom of Solomon made upon his age is strikingly shown by the fabulous stories which are believed of him even to this day, especially by the Arabs. Worthless as these stories are, they testify clearly to the extraordinary wonder and admiration which his intellectual gifts excited in the minds of men.

46. SOLOMON'S RELIGIOUS WORSHIP. During the golden age of Israel, men's eyes were drawn not only to the vast wealth of the king, not only to his wonderful wisdom, but also to the pomp and outward fervour of his worship. The gorgeous shrine which had been erected by his genius and munificence was maintained after a fashion worthy of its beginning. It does not appear that the Temple had any revenues from popular sources. It was the king's chapel, and it was he who ordered its services and supplied its needs in general conformity with the Law of Moses. The daily offerings^g were from his flocks and herds; and the choral service in which David had trained the Levites was continued upon a larger and more permanent scale,^h at his expense and under his directions. But the king reserved his own ceremonial and official appearances in the Temple for the three great festivals of the Jewish calendar.ⁱ From his

^a Judges ix. 14.

^c Ezek. xxxi. 3.

^e Such a contest is related to have occurred between Solomon and Hiram.

^f 1 Kings iv. 34; x. 1.

^h 2 Chron. viii. 14, 15.

^b 2 Kings xiv. 9.

^d Amos ii. 9.

^g 2 Chron. viii. 12-13.

ⁱ 1 Kings ix. 25.

palace upon Mount Zion an "ascent"^a or viaduct led up to the Temple platform, crossing the valley which lay between, upon arches built of huge stones. Over this "ascent" the royal procession passed with all the splendour and pomp which that magnificent court could supply. The king's body-guard of foreign mercenaries took down their golden shields from the great pillar-hall on such occasions as these. Such men—uncircumcised heathens as they were—must have seemed strangely out of place around the Lord's anointed, and still more so within the precincts of the Lord's House. Yet, as being responsible for the personal safety of that king who was also a priest upon his throne,^b their presence was required wherever the king went, nor does it seem to have shocked the religious sense of that generation, although it was afterwards looked upon as a great impiety.^c In strange contrast to these heathenish warriors, with their glittering arms and uncouth gestures,^d were the trained singers who went up with the king, or came forth to meet him chanting psalms and sacred choruses, with clashing of cymbals, blowing of trumpets, and striking of strings. Amidst these the king himself, arrayed in all his glory, his long hair dyed and sprinkled with gold dust, a gorgeous canopy carried over his head by the officers of his household. Behind him a great concourse of courtiers, dependants, and guests, who followed in his train. The "palace" of such a monarch was in itself a town, in which all the arts of life and most of its business were represented. When Solomon went up in state to offer sacrifices there would be no lack of worshippers to fill the outer courts, even apart from the general congregation of Israel. Arrived at the Temple, he would find the priests with their attendants waiting for him, and with their assistance he would offer the

^a 1 Kings x. 5; 2 Chron. ix. 4.

^b Ps. cx. 4; Zech. vi. 13.

^c Ezech. xliv. 7-9.

^d Zeph. i. 9 compared with 1 Sam. v. 5.

prescribed sacrifices upon the great altar before the porch. If he himself took the part of chief celebrant, he did not think that he violated the Divine law in doing so. The anointed king stood to a certain extent outside the Law of Moses, and the Divine decree which appointed him visible representative of the invisible majesty of necessity modified the foregoing revelation, without, however, really contravening it. It was only when the splendour of the anointed king had almost faded out in the degenerate seed of Solomon that the old strictness of the Law revived in the religious ideas of men.^a

47. VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA (1 Kings x.; 2 Chron. ix.). About the middle of Solomon's reign there happened a thing which showed better than anything else could have shown the wonderful impression made upon the minds of men by Solomon's greatness, by his magnificence, his wisdom, and his religion. The Queen of Sheba came, as our Lord says,^b "from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." Those "uttermost parts" were indeed not far away according to our ideas, being in all probability in the southernmost portion of Arabia; but they were the remotest parts from which any traveller could reach Jerusalem by land^c in those days. Solomon's commerce with the neighbouring region of Ophir had probably made the Queen of Sheba^d acquainted with the fame of the great king, the favourite of Jehovah, who had built the most glorious Temple in the world, and who seemed to know all the secrets of nature

^a 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-20 compared with the account in Kings, and with 2 Kings xvi. 12, 13.

^b Matt. xii. 42.

^c That she came all the way by land is evident from the mention of camels.

^d Sheba—in the Greek Version Saba—is almost certainly identical with the land of the Joktanite Sabeans (Gen. x. 28), a Semitic race dwelling in Arabia (Job i. 15). There was a Cushite Sheba (Gen. x. 7) whose descendants were also known as Sabeans (Isa. xlv. 14).

and of life. So she did what was indeed a most unusual and courageous thing—she left her country and travelled to Jerusalem, through the deserts of Arabia and Syria, with a great retinue and with great store of precious things. She wanted to prove Solomon with hard questions, *i.e.*, with difficulties such as perplexed the minds of thinking people in those days, and such as she never got answered by any one else. Probably if these hard questions were put to us we should think many of them very childish, and many of Solomon's answers would seem little better than plays upon words; but amidst all that belonged to the infancy of the world we should recognise many of the lasting puzzles of life, with which every age in turn will perplex itself. Solomon could not really have solved these hard problems, but he had reflected on them more wisely than any one else had done, and he was able to satisfy the queen, at least for the time. She, indeed, was quite overcome with all she saw and heard. She took note of the stately pageantry of the court, so different from the coarse profusion of uncivilized countries. She took note also of the splendour in which he went up, on some great festival, to worship in the House of the Lord. She witnessed a part at least of the costly and careful ceremonial which at once expressed what was good, and concealed what was wanting, in the devotion of the king and of his people. She rightly felt that there was nothing like it to be found on earth. She praised and blessed the king, his people who served him, and his God who had raised him up; and so she departed to her own land, taking with her some presents to remind her of all she had seen, but leaving behind gifts of enormous value^a in precious gold, and almost more precious spices. Solomon had no scruples in accepting such gifts. They were due to him as the earthly representative of the true God,

^a More than half-a-million in gold alone.

whose glory and honour were inextricably bound up with his own.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF INQUIRY.

1. *What were some of the principal imports from Egypt?*
 2. *What post did Solomon occupy, and for what purpose?*
 3. *How did he collect a fleet?*
 4. *What did the fleet bring back?*
 5. *What other fleet had Solomon, and whither did it sail?*
 6. *What were the sources of Solomon's revenues?*
 7. *What was about the annual value (1) of the tribute raised in kind, (2) of the gold from various sources?*
 8. *What was the character of Solomon's "proverbs"?*
 9. *Where were his songs sung?*
 10. *What were (humanly speaking) the sources of his "wisdom"?*
 11. *How were the Temple services maintained?*
 12. *On what occasions was Solomon always present?*
 13. *How did he reach the Temple?*
 14. *Who went with him?*
 15. *Why did he take the chief part in the sacrifices?*
 16. *What had the Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon?*
 17. *What did she come to do?*
 18. *What was the effect of what she saw and heard upon her?*
 19. *What did she give to Solomon?*
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CHAPTER VII.

THE FALL OF SOLOMON.

48. SOURCES OF DECAY. That Solomon's kingdom contained in itself the seeds of disorder and destruction cannot be doubted. A throne supported by foreign mercenaries is never safe. Great public works carried out by forced labour cost more than they are worth in the discontent which they produce. A despotism like Solomon's however beneficent in intention becomes inevitably oppressive in fact. Even when the king was young, and when all his wisdom was devoted to the service of his people, he could not possibly right every wrong that was done in his name. When he grew older, and when his time was taken up with pleasure and the pageantry of state, and the management of commercial enterprises, we may be certain that all manner of violence and fraud was practised by his officers and servants, high and low. The elaborate organisation of his government, and the enormous increase of wealth, added at once to the opportunities and to the temptations for oppression. In such an age the individual citizen becomes insignificant, except he be one of the governing caste ; in such an age, wealth appears to be the one thing desirable to be attained by any means. Solomon had an exceptionally keen eye for what was going on within his dominions, and he saw plainly enough the evils which he had not the unselfish earnestness to grapple with.^a To the end of his reign the outward splendour of his kingdom remained but little impaired, but there came to be more and more of misery and disorder beneath the surface. The king's peace was rarely broken by sound of open war, but lawlessness and discontent

^a Prov. xxviii. 15, 16 ; Eccles. iii. 16 ; v. 8 ; viii. 11 ; x. 5-7.

gathered head in private.^a Amidst the magnificence of the palace, the luxurious idleness of Etam, the stateliness of the temple worship, the sharp ear of the wise king caught the murmurs of the rising storm, but he did nothing to avert it.^b A man of great uprightness, and of strong determination, might have crushed the evil before it was too late; but Solomon was no longer upright, and no longer strong for the highest duty of a king. The very wisdom which God had given him became to him a source of weakness, for it made him more keenly alive to all the evils of life, and to the apparent impossibility of curing them.^c

49. SOLOMON'S HAREM. It was no doubt policy which at first induced the king to multiply wives unto himself, a policy unhappily sanctioned by the example of his father,^d although condemned by the better feelings of the people.^e The same desire to secure by peaceful means the friendship of his neighbours which induced him to make a daughter of Pharaoh his queen, induced him to ask in marriage the daughters of all the princes round about. It provided a luxurious home for them; it was felt as a compliment by their relatives, and it gave to Israel a certain security against hostile combinations. The fathers and brothers of Solomon's wives were not likely to make plots against his throne. What began in policy was continued from lower motives, until 1000 women, with all their idle and mischievous attendants, filled the palaces and pleasure-houses which he had built.^f Most of these, like Pharaoh's daughter, were heathens, and most of them were much more heathenish than she, for the religion of the Egyptian court had much about it which was grand and impressive.

^a 1 Kings xii. 4, 16.

^b Eccles. i. 15, compared with Prov. x. 16, 17; xx. 26.

^c Eccles. ii. 17, 18, &c.

^d 2 Sam. iii. 2-5; v. 13.

^e Deut. xvii. 17.

^f 1 Kings xi. 3.

50. SOLOMON'S IDOLATRY. As Solomon grew older he spent more and more of his time among his favourites. The idle king living among these idle women learnt first to tolerate, and then to imitate their heathenish ways. He did not indeed cease to believe in the God of Israel with his mind. He did not cease to offer the usual sacrifices in the Temple at the great feasts. But his heart was not right with God, his worship became merely formal; his soul left empty by the dying out of true religious fervour, sought to be filled with any religious excitement which offered itself. No doubt the devotions of these Canaanitish women must have seemed folly to the wise king; but their folly was more in earnest than his wisdom, and therefore got the better of it. And now for the first time a worship was publicly set up amongst the people of the Lord, which was not simply irregular or forbidden (like that of Gideon^a or the Danites^b), but was downright idolatrous. Three altars at least were built by Solomon himself upon the conspicuous hill to the east of Jerusalem which forms the southern peak of the Mount of Olives,^c and therefore right over against the Temple itself. Attached to these altars seem to have been courts, chapels, dwellings for the priests who served them, and other necessary buildings.^d One of the altars was for the worship of Ashtoreth, the favourite female deity of the Canaanitish tribes, but especially of the Zidonians. In the prominence assigned to this idolatry we may see the results of the close alliance and intercourse with Tyre. Another was dedicated to Milcom or Molech, the national god of the Ammonites. The third was in honour of Chemosh, the fierce sun-god of Moab, who was worshipped as the lord of blood and fire. Chemosh and

^a Judges viii. 27.

^b Judges xviii. 30, 31.

^c 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13. It has been commonly known as the "Mount of Corruption."

^d The Sanctuary of Baal at Samaria had a "vestry" (2 Kings x. 22).

Milcom were originally only varieties of the same deity, who under the name of Baal was honoured by all the old Canaanite stock. Other altars were set up for other of Solomon's wives in less conspicuous places, but these three would suffice, not only for the great majority of the strange women, but also for many of their countrymen who might be staying from time to time in Jerusalem.^a

51. SOLOMON'S PUNISHMENT (1 Kings xi. 9-13). God was very angry with His anointed. He who had been made much greater in all outward things than David, and had enjoyed personal revelations from God which David had never enjoyed, had not walked in David's ways. David had indeed committed sins great and grievous, but he had repented, and he had walked in faith and piety to the last. Solomon had not publicly offended against the moral law as then revealed,^b but he had violated the very first obligation laid upon him as vicegerent of God: he had permitted, encouraged, and practised the worship of other and rival deities. This was high treason. He had used his entirely exceptional position to establish and glorify the worship of the true God; but he had also used it to encourage the worship of devils, of false and foul divinities. Better not to have concerned himself with the Lord at all than to have placed Him upon the same level with the filthy Ashtoreth and the cruel Chemosh. It was, we may suppose, in a dream that the Lord spake to him once more, and told him what He would do. He would put out his glory and cast his crown down to the ground: the kingdom should be rent from him and given to one of his servants: nevertheless, for the sake of his father, and because of the Divine promise which had yet to be fulfilled, the break-up should be postponed: the kingdom should not be

^a They seem to have remained in use until Josiah's time.

^b The commandment which Solomon transgressed by his marriages (1 Kings xi. 2) was a religious one.

torn until after his death, and even then one tribe should be left to the house of David. Meanwhile troubles and anxieties began to increase upon the guilty and suspicious king. He had some enemies from the first, who were formerly unable to do him any serious mischief, but now took advantage of the growing weakness and disorder of his government to make themselves very troublesome. So men recognised the fact that they had been allowed to remain by the providence of God, in order that they might become instruments of chastisement in His hands.

52. HADAD (1 Kings xi. 14-22). One of these enemies was Hadad, of the royal family of Edom. He was a child when David and Joab had done their best to exterminate the Edomites,^a but he had escaped into Egypt. The King of Egypt had received him and pensioned him, thinking he might some day be useful for political purposes. As he grew up he became a favourite at court, and received the sister of the queen in marriage. His son by this marriage was brought up as a member of the royal family. When Hadad, however, heard of the death of David, and of the fierce old captain who had so nearly destroyed his people, he insisted on returning to Edom, and would not be persuaded to stay. Amidst the mountain fastnesses of Edom he gathered together the remnants of his people, and gratified his natural hatred of Israel by making sudden forays into the outlying districts of the south.

53. REZON (1 Kings xi. 23-25). On the opposite side, in the far north, was another of Solomon's persistent enemies. This man, Rezon by name, was a Syrian adventurer, who had been driven out of the town of Zobah, and had lived the life of a freebooter in the deserts to the north-east of Palestine. When David overran these districts, and broke the power of the Syrian chieftians,^b Rezon took advantage of the confusion to seize upon the ancient and beautifully situ-

^a 2 Sam. viii. 14.

^b 2 Sam. viii. 3-13.

ated city of Damascus,^a and here he was able to establish himself firmly. Solomon's dominions indeed extended far beyond Damascus, and his fortified posts were planted on all sides of the fertile oasis in which the city lies ; but of Damascus itself Solomon was never able to obtain possession, and Rezon remained as a thorn in his side all his days : indeed he founded a kingdom which grew to be very powerful and very dangerous both to Israel and to Judah.^b

54. JEROBOAM (1 Kings xi. 26-40). A more dangerous foe than either the Edomite prince or the Syrian adventurer was growing up beneath the eye of Solomon himself. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was not a person whose enmity the king would either have expected or feared. An orphan of the house of Ephraim, he was taken into the king's employment, and was acting as one of the foremen who superintended the forced labour of the Canaanites upon the new fortifications of Jerusalem. The king when he visited the works took note of his activity, and promoted him to be overseer of the heavy work which had to be done by his tribesmen of Ephraim, either in fortifying towns, or in making roads, or in building barracks. The choice was not a wise one, because Jeroboam's sympathies were naturally with his brethren. Like them he resented the increasing burdens laid upon the free-born Israelites ; and like them he could not forget the pre-eminence which had once belonged to Ephraim and Shiloh, but had now passed to Judah and Jerusalem. Something like patriotism,^c and some righteous indignation at oppression mingled no doubt with the dreams of a selfish ambition in the active mind of the young ruler ; but he would hardly have ventured upon any action had it not been for a most unexpected en-

^a Gen. xv. 2 ; 2 Kings v. 12.

^b 1 Kings xv. 20 ; Isaiah vii. 1, 8.

^c The northern tribes undoubtedly felt the rule of the house of David to be the rule of strangers (1 Kings xii. 16), and this feeling was never discouraged by their own prophets.

couragement. One day, as he left Jerusalem on his way northwards, he met a man well known to him as belonging to Shiloh, the ancient sanctuary of Ephraim, where the ark had rested so long.^a This was the prophet Ahijah, one of those men who since the days of Samuel had been regarded as the messengers of the Lord, commissioned to make known His will to the prince and the people of the Lord. Connected as he was with Ephraim and with Shiloh we cannot doubt that his personal sympathies did not go with that political and religious revolution which had crowned Mount Moriah with the Temple of the Lord, and Mount Zion with the palace of His anointed. But when he met Jeroboam alone in the open country on this day he did not speak out of his own heart, but by Divine revelation. He had on him a new upper garment.^b Suddenly he threw it off, tore it into twelve pieces, and gave ten of them to Jeroboam.^c Then he declared to him in God's name that in like manner should ten out of the twelve tribes of Israel be torn away from Solomon and given to Jeroboam because of the apostasies and idolatries of the king and of his court. Nevertheless he declared that one tribe should remain for David's sake and for the sake of Jerusalem, and further that the great division should not be made in Solomon's time but in that of his son. Lastly, he told him that his dreams should be fulfilled, and that he should be king, and he bade him know that if he would serve the Lord faithfully the Lord would be with him and would establish his dynasty upon the throne. It is

^a Joshua xviii. 32, 33; xxiv. 32, 33; Psalm lxxviii. 60, 67, 68.

^b This garment was foursquare and folded like a plaid.

^c The number of pieces did not correspond exactly to the facts of the case. In reality three tribes—Judah, Benjamin, Simcon—remained to the house of David, as well as a large part of Levi. Ten tribes went to Jeroboam if we count the two halves of Manasseh. The three southern tribes, however, formed only one territory for all practical purposes. Thus the prophet's *action* was accommodated to the original twelve-fold division of the nation, while his *words* expressed the actual facts.

not likely that Solomon heard of this interview.^a More probably Jeroboam, inflamed by ambition, made some premature attempt to hasten the disruption. Solomon suspected Jeroboam, and sought to put him to death, but in vain. Jeroboam escaped into Egypt and took refuge with Shishak,^b the young Pharaoh, who entertained no friendly feelings towards the new monarchy, and was ready enough to protect him from the vengeance of Solomon.^c Here he remained awaiting a chance to return, and fomenting, as far as he could, the discontent of his fellow-tribesmen.

55. SOLOMON'S DEATH. Amidst these clouds and gathering storms, the sun of that long summer day sank below the horizon. For forty years Solomon reigned, and even then he must have died comparatively young.^d But if he was not old in years, he was very old in that knowledge of good and evil which he had so eagerly pursued. He was very old in that weariness of life which comes of unrestrained indulgence of body and of mind. He was very old in that worst sadness which comes to him who has outlived at once his usefulness and his religion. He was buried in the city of David, *i.e.*, within the old quarter of Jerusalem where his father's residence had been, and where his father's tomb was. With him was buried the short-lived glory and unity of Israel. With him was buried, too, that ideal son of David,

^a The prophet Ahijah seems to have remained undisturbed at Shiloh 1 Kings xiv. 2.

^b 1 Kings xi. 40; 2 Chron. xii. 2. Shishak or Shashank I. was the son of an Assyrian prince who made himself master of Egypt and commenced a new dynasty—the 22nd.

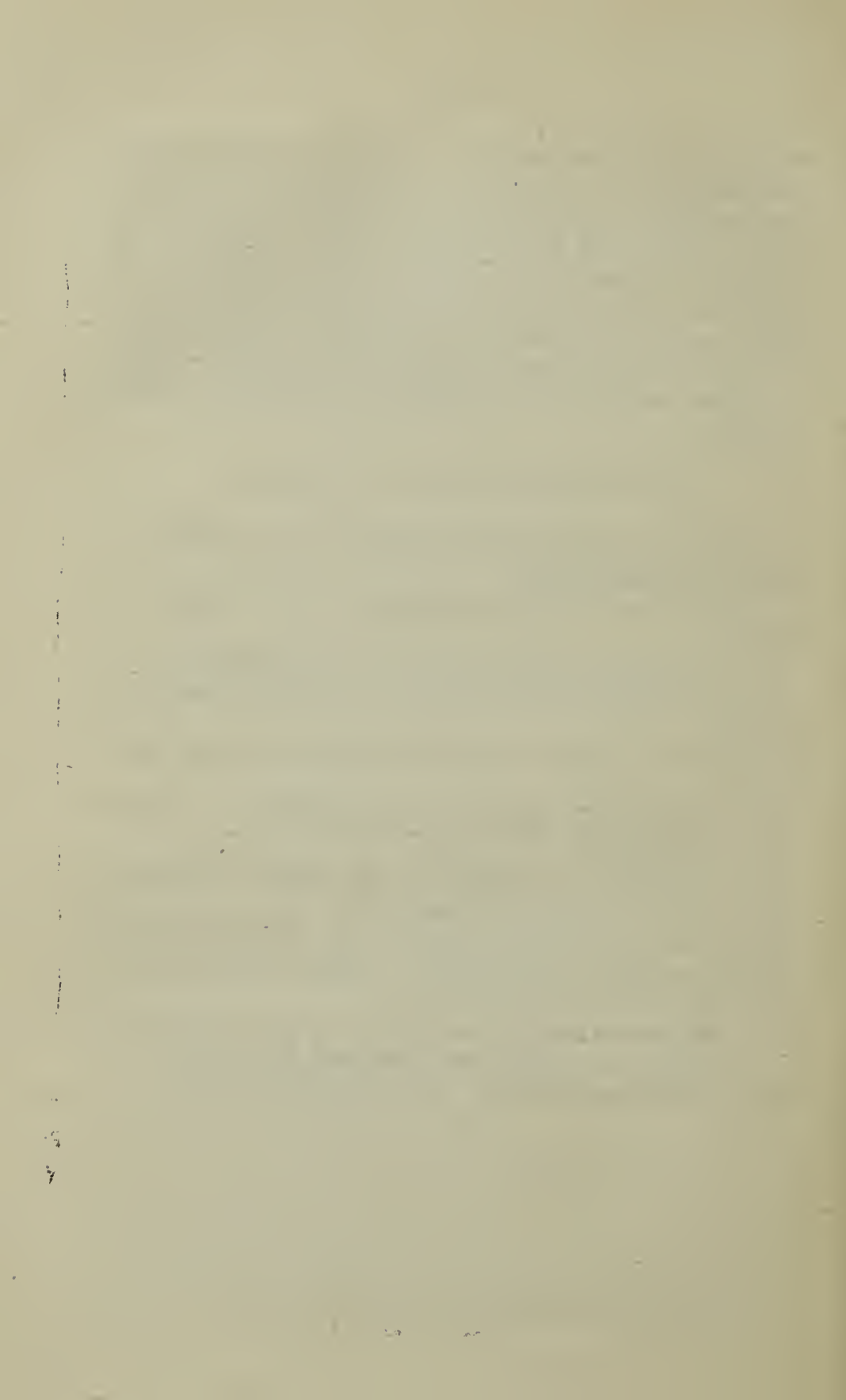
^c The Greek Version adds many details concerning Jeroboam which do not, however, seem worthy of credit. According to these his mother's name, and the name of the town in Mount Ephraim which he fortified first for Solomon and afterwards for himself, was Sarira. His wife was Ano, the eldest sister of Pharaoh's queen and of the wife of Hadad. Immediately upon the death of Solomon he returned to Sarira.

^d Josephus states that Solomon lived ninety-four years, and reigned eighty; but this is quite in keeping with his habit of exaggeration. The date of his death may be taken approximately as B.C. 971.

who was to reign over the people of God, clothed with majesty and glory ; who, being gifted with wisdom from above, was to do judgment and justice in the earth, and was to attract the homage of all nations for himself and for the Lord ; who, being the chosen and peculiar type of that Divine son of David who was to come, should occupy the promises of God for the time being, and represent, as far as fallen man could represent, the glories of the Messiah.

QUESTIONS AND POINTS OF INQUIRY.

1. *What was (humanly speaking) the weakness of Solomon's government ?*
2. *What law did he transgress from motives of policy ?*
3. *What still greater sin did this lead him into ?*
4. *What altars were built near Jerusalem, and where ?*
5. *What sentence did God pronounce upon Solomon ?*
6. *What was the history (1) of Hadad, (2) of Rezon, (3) of Jeroboam ?*
7. *What was the feeling in the house of Ephraim upon which Jeroboam worked ?*
8. *What did Ahijah do and say ? Why did he tear the garment into twelve pieces ? How were the thirteen tribal territories really divided ?*
9. *Who was Pharaoh in the latter years of Solomon ?*
10. *What was Solomon designed by God to be ? How far did he succeed ? How far did he fail ?*



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